IAN ALLAN

VINTAGE ROADSCENE

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MARCH-MAY 1987 Vol 3 No 10

- Midland Red to Dudley Zoo
- Fire King
- Anecdotes of Coach Driving
- Stories of a Thornycroft Works Driver
- Collecting and Modelling News

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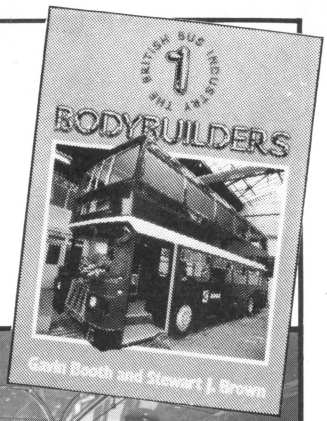

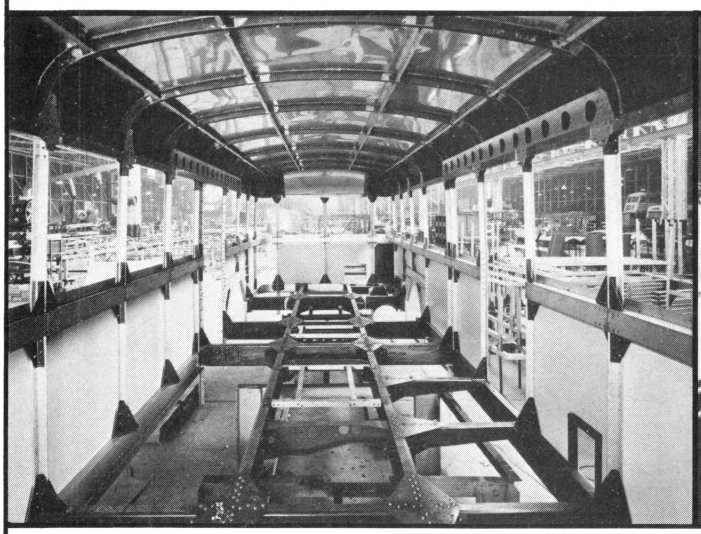

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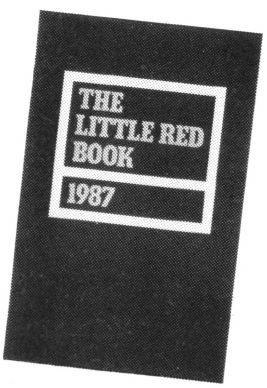

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Cover:
A 1949 Austin livestock carrier seen at the Southsea Spectacular in 1986.
S. W. Stevens-Stratten

Inset:
Midland Red No 2135, 'FEDD' type double deck bus EHA 267 seen on 21 September 1951. See the article on page 49.
Ian Allan Library/V. C. Jones

Next issue of
VINTAGE ROADSCENE
ON SALE
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Drivers Reminiscences by B. J. Winch
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VINTAGE ROADSCENE

MARCH-MAY 1987 **Vol 3 No 10**

Editor: S. W. Stevens-Stratten, FRSA

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As the rally season will shortly commence, a word on insurance may not come amiss. Obviously it is illegal to have a vehicle on the road without Third Party insurance, and this should also cover the vehicle on the rally field. We will not waste space going into details of this obligatory insurance, but briefly it protects you from a claim should you injure or damage other people or their property. It does not cover you or your vehicle.

The danger is the rally organiser who may be carrying very limited insurance or may try to get away with none at all. The rally organiser should hold adequate Public Liability insurance and the Historic Commercial Vehicle Society stipulate that any event publicised in their own 'News', or any event organised by themselves, should have Public Liability cover for £1,000,000. This, on the face of it, may seem a lot of money, but when you consider the large sums awarded in the courts for damages and the high legal costs — for just one injured person — you can realise the logic behind it.

Let us suppose a young mother, pushing her child in a pram, is leaving the rally site. You are also leaving and making for the gateway, you swing round, passing between two badly parked vehicles. The mother and pram come out between the vehicles. You barely see her for a split second. HELP! BANG! A crushed pram and mutilated mother lay under your front wheels! The scene can be left to the imagination, but don't think its a far-fetched melodramatic nightmare — it could happen — let us hope its not you.

Fortunately mother and child are not killed, although from the pain and suffering and subsequent crippled life, it may have been more merciful if they had both died instantly. The claim is a joint one against you and the rally organiser. But wait. Did you sign a bit at the bottom of your entry form which stated that you would absolve the rally organiser(s) from any claim for any injury howsoever caused arising from the entry of your vehicle in the rally? If you did then you are a fool, because when your insurers try to negotiate the claim, the organiser(s) will wave your signature and say 'Nothing to do with us — we're fireproof'. And its true. Your insurers can then say that as you signed away your subrogation rights they are unable to indemnify. You had better start selling up house and home to pay for the claim — no more preserved vehicles for you — you won't even have a private car left.

The moral is clear, make certain the rally organiser has full Public Liability cover and do *not* sign anything other than indemnifying the organiser(s) in respect of injury to yourself (and only yourself). If there is any doubt, then consult a solicitor before signing anything — or give the rally a miss.

A THORNYCROFT DRIVER

Stories of a Works Driver – 2

Above.
The author (centre) prior to his retirement alongside a new Swiftsure 6 tonner.
Author's Collection

W. Musson

BACK IN the 1930s I came off delivering chassis and took the journey vehicle, which was the name we gave for a regular run with our own lorry picking up parts from outside contractors or delivering stores, etc. The weekly rota ran like this. Monday run to Coventry for radiators, back Monday night and unload them on Tuesday morning. Then pick up stuff for Southampton Docks and deliver that and on to Woolston to pick up castings from our shipyard and foundry, then back to Basingstoke and unload. Load up and leave on the Wednesday morning for Manchester, this was in the old 20mph days so got there and unloaded at night, leave first thing in the morning (Thursday), sometimes going to Warrington to pick up two-speed axles from Rubery Owen, then on to Coventry, which of course was on the way back, add more radiators, etc to make a full load and back to Basingstoke to unload on the Thursday night or early Friday morning. I would then load up and have about 15 calls in London on the Friday, then back Friday night, unload and into the Works on Saturday morning to load up ready for an early start on the Monday. 'That was the Week that Was' and it went on for 16 years, unless I got switched around to do some other jobs which, of course, did happen.

In the early 1930s I used to have a six-wheeler for the regular runs and sometimes had to call at Birmingham on the return from Manchester. On one occasion I had left Birmingham and was belting back towards Basingstoke, but one of my mates from Thornycroft was in a cafe near Solihull, when the police (who had little sports cars for chasing speeding lorry drivers) came in. They asked him if he knew of anyone in the firm with a yellow six-wheeler, because if he did he could tell the driver that although they had not caught him yet, but they would do, as he was not that clever. Now the funny thing is that just a week or so after that I was off work with German Measles, so one of the other works drivers was on the regular run. He got caught and was fined £5 as a regular offender. When I got back to work he only wanted me to pay half of it, but I said it was nothing to do with me!

On one trip to Manchester it was lovely weather all the way up until I got to Altrincham and then the fog came down and it was a real 'pea-souper' and absolutely black. I had picked up a soldier in Oxford who wanted to get home to Hyde in Cheshire, but he had to walk in front holding a newspaper so that I could see. He had to walk about nine miles to Trafford Park before the fog lifted and then the moon shone beautifully. As he had done me a good turn I took him home to Hyde — to save him walking any more!

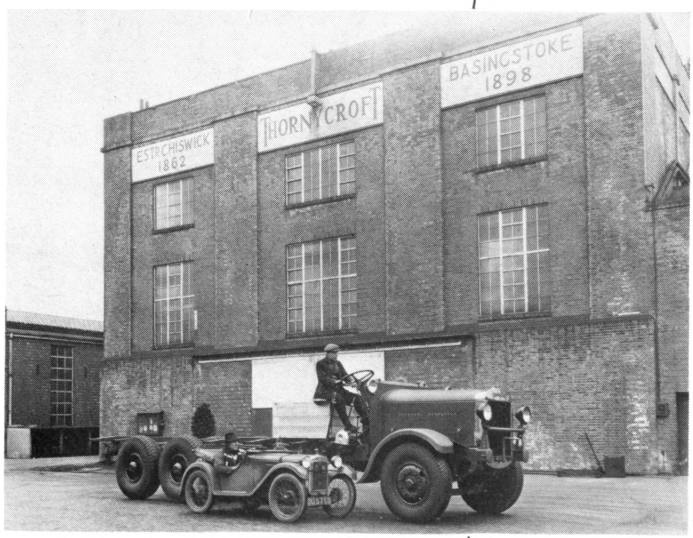
Once during the war, I did a special round trip — Manchester, then to Bingley, then on to Lincoln to pick up at the brake people there, on to Coventry and then back to Basingstoke. I had got to Bingley and was walking across the open space between the roadway and the office when I suddenly went down a hole and had water up to my waist. I had not observed a hole that was covered over at the top! Of course, it had to be the day when I had a new pair of trousers on!

I had a wash down and put my pyjama trousers on while my own new pair were put in the boiler room to dry out. Unfortunately the bloody fool in there managed to burn a leg off — so that was the end of them! I had a hell of a row in the office, for it was not only a question of the money they cost, but the clothing coupons necessary to ge a replacement pair. However, a week or so later they found some coupons so I was able to buy another pair of trousers — but I had to go all the way home in my pyjamas!

I well remember the blitz on Manchester one Wednesday night. It had already been going on for a couple of hours when I arrived at Altrincham about 8.00pm. Instead of stopping there, like a fool, I carried on until stopped by the police, who asked me where I was going. When I said

Below left:
Alongside part of the Basingstoke works, a type QC rigid six-wheeler 12 ton chassis which at that time was the largest British commercial vehicle alongside the smallest car — an early Austin 7. *Ian Allan Library*

Below right:
One of Thornycroft's own fleet — a Handy 2 ton van in 1934. *Ian Allan Library*



Left:
On test with a Thornycroft type JD6 Jupiter 6½ ton lorry. The six cylinder petrol engine developed 86hp (cylinders 4⅜in by 5¼in). The wheelbase was 13ft 6in and the body length behind the cab was 14ft 6in.
Ian Allan Library

Trafford Park they put some police and guards on the lorry and I had to take them to Trafford Park. When I got to our depot I found part of it was alight and the first thing I did was to assist the night-watchman put out three incendiaries which were on top of the petrol pump! A nice welcome! We put out several small fires with sand and the old stirrup pumps and generally had a very bad night as the 'Jerries' did not stop their attack on the City until about 6 o'clock in the morning. However, we saved the depot and the next week when I went there the Manager gave me a nice little present and so did the Thornycroft HQ in London. The chaps at Basingstoke gave me an old medal they had found 'for glory', etc and it now says to 'Bill Musson for Fire-fighting'. It was a nice gesture and I have still got it.

In my early days there were very few forward control vehicles about and you had plenty of room in the cab, without the engine in there, to stretch out and spend the night in the cab instead of having to put up at a hotel or hostel for the night. The forward control cabs, with the engine partly in them it was not easy to stretch out comfortably for sleeping, but of course they were much warmer in the winter. What you lost on the roundabouts you gained on the swings!

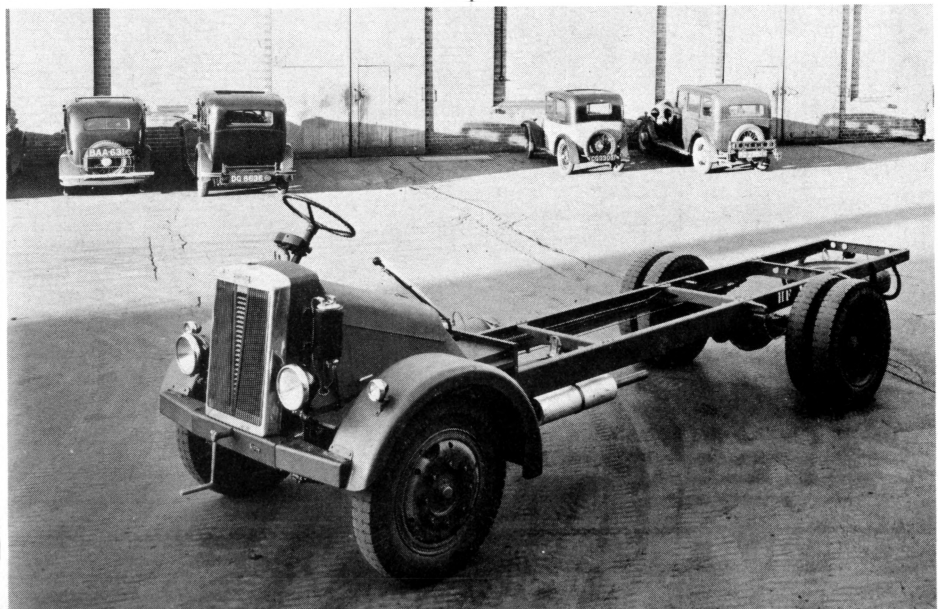
One night going North, with a bare chassis, I had got to Southam and turned left for Warwick where there is a steep hill about three miles away. All of a sudden all my lights fused, so I had to stop. I knew that there was a lay-by at the top of the hill and I had noticed there was a steam-roller there with its living wagon when I passed. It must have been about half-past nine when I knocked at the door and asked if I could leave the chassis there. The old boy said 'Yes, come in'. It was very cosy inside and he made me a cup of tea and then after some natter we got down for the night, as he gave me a bed. He got up about 6.00am and lit the stove, put the kettle on and cooked me a breakfast. He would not take any money for it as he said he enjoyed my company. As it was then light I was able to carry on without any trouble.

I remember going to Coventry once, and I had my wife and young son with me. My mate who had a forward control PE model had gone on in front, and we got almost to Oxford at Nuneham Courtney but my mate was nowhere to be seen. A bit further on I found the Army were on the move with an anti-aircraft gun, and my mate has gone straight into it, and the gun barrel had gone through the windscreen, through the cab and was sticking out the back. Fortunately, it was on the nearside, and if he had been carrying a passenger that person would have surely been killed. They said that when the gun barrel had been pushed back by the force of the collision, it had loaded the gun — so there was an explosive situation!

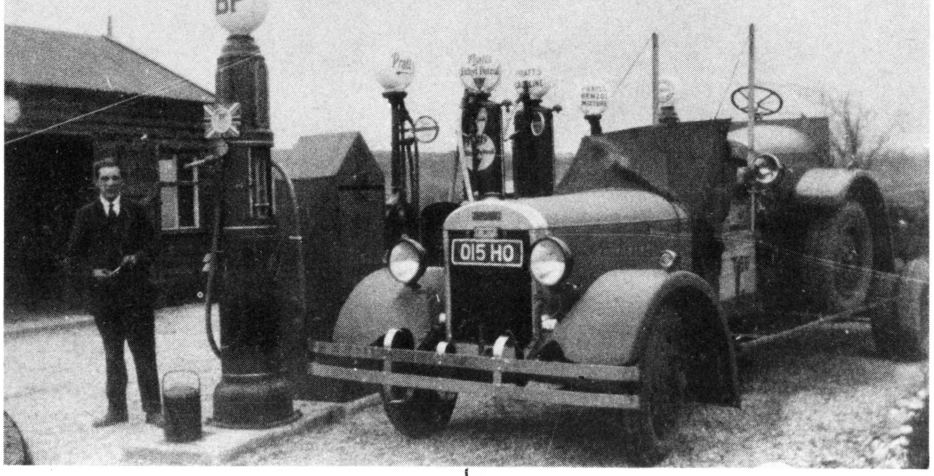
A bit later on I was on the Manchester run and the same mate with the Thornycroft PE was in front of me with a big load of gear for Liverpool Docks. He was in a bit of a hurry and came to a town where he went to overtake a bus and then found a new island with a bollard and a lamp standard in the middle of the road. So he swung in a bit sharpish and missed the island but his nearside rear wheel got hung up on the offside front wheel of the bus, which put the double-decker up on the pavement! My mate did not stop and went like the devil, but I kept well back as I too had the Thornycroft name on the vehicle and I did not want anyone to take my number — I did not know whether any one took his — and frankly was not bothered. I stopped behind and eventually the bus moved on and then so did I. When I got to the depot my mate said he was about to come out and look for me. When I told him he had put the bus on the pavement, he denied it, so I suggested he look at his back nearside wheel, and when we did so we could see he had pulled the rim off and it was lucky the tyre had not blown. Anyhow, he got away with it.

Some of the old firms on the road were KCR Blackburn, Red House Motors of Coventry, Bereford Kadey and Parkinsons and all these were good firms and I can remember some of the drivers. Then there was Bouts Tillotsons and I used to reckon they were the cream of the road. I used to meet their drivers in the cafe at Bassetts Pole, which in my opinion, was the finest cafe between Basingstoke and Manchester and was about seven miles South of Lichfield. The road there was quite wide and there used to be about a mile of lorries all parked at the side. Later the cafe sold out to some firm in Birmingham and they did away with the old sheds and put some new buildings up because they thought they would make more money out of the 'posh' people with their own cars rather than us drivers. But they made a big mistake! They then turned the place into a dance hall, and that went bust. It was never the same again.

From there you went on to the Barlaston Cafe, just beyond Stone and you could get quite a good feed there. Smith's at Talke was another good cafe. I also remember when they started the long distance



Right:
A Nippy chassis outside the works in 1938. The rear view of the cars is interesting, all with distinctive shapes — unlike today's standardised hatch-backs. *Ian Allan Library*



Left:
A stop for petrol on a delivery run c1928 with two chassis carried 'piggy-back' fashion. Note the old petrol pumps with the handle — no modern electric high speed delivery in those days. *Author's Collection*

coaches, I think it was from Glasgow and a firm used to run some lovely coaches with, I think, a built-in toilet.

Another firm I remember was Faulkners of Manchester as they used to park in our depot at night and they ran a fleet of Thornycroft J type from World War 1. One lot would come in at 4.00 in the morning and take their lorries and trailers loaded with bales of cotton to Liverpool Docks. The next shift would come in about 8.00 at night and they would take the lorries to the Mills and return for the shift early next morning.

The Old Malt Shop at Rugeley was a pub kept by Tom Latham and it was like home from home and we used to do well there. I remember one night going from Basingstoke to Manchester with a chassis and somewhere about Banbury it got very foggy. Two chaps in a bull-nose Morris were stuck and could not see a thing, but as I was on a chassis I was not so bad and I was able to chug along at about 10mph. They were going to Stockport and asked would I mind if they followed me. I did not mind and before we started off they said that when I got to Lichfield, past the Cathedral and over the top of the hill, down on the right-hand side there was a good pub, so stop there and we would have a drink. It was the first time I had stopped at that place, but they gave me a glass of rum — I think it cost 9d (4½p) and it was the lovliest rum I ever had for it kept me warm all the way to Manchester!

When we changed from the petrol engine to the diesel engine, it made a big difference. All that noise in the cab took some getting used to — the petrol engine was a sweet sound, but the diesel was a raucous noise.

Each driver had his own vehicle, until a new foreman decided to change all that, so when I went to get my vehicle one morning I found another driver had it. When I complained, I was told that the 'one driver — one vehicle' policy was being stopped and drivers would change round. I told them that if they did that within a month they would not have a vehicle on the road.

When the foreman asked why, I said that no one would do anything to a vehicle in the way of maintenance, etc and no one would care, but if that was what they wanted then alright. I took the lorry to London and next morning went into the office to ask what vehicle I was to be driving. The foreman said he had been thinking over what I had said, and came to the conclusion that I was right, so we were all to stick to our own vehicles. He asked me if there was anything wrong with the vehicle I had yesterday, but I replied that I did not know as I was not interested, for I would probably not have it again for some weeks and could not have cared less! The foreman then said that the driver who had taken mine had reported a lot wrong with it. I thanked him, but said I knew of nothing wrong and went to see the fitter, who was a nice bloke. He then went to the foreman and asked what was all this about the faults on Musson's lorry. If all our vehicles were maintained in the condition that Musson kept his — then he would be out of a job!

I remember one vile morning I left about 6.00am to go to Bolton with a six-wheeler to pick up some stuff from Bromilow and Edwards, so another chap had to do my normal job of going to Woolston. By about 10.00am he was still waiting for a case to be put on so he went to the boss whining about how could he get to Southampton in this weather and he would miss the boat, etc, and what about Bill Musson who had left early for Bolton in such terrible weather. Apparently, the boss said 'Once Bill Musson has left the gates I don't have to worry about him, because he will always get there and back in one piece'.

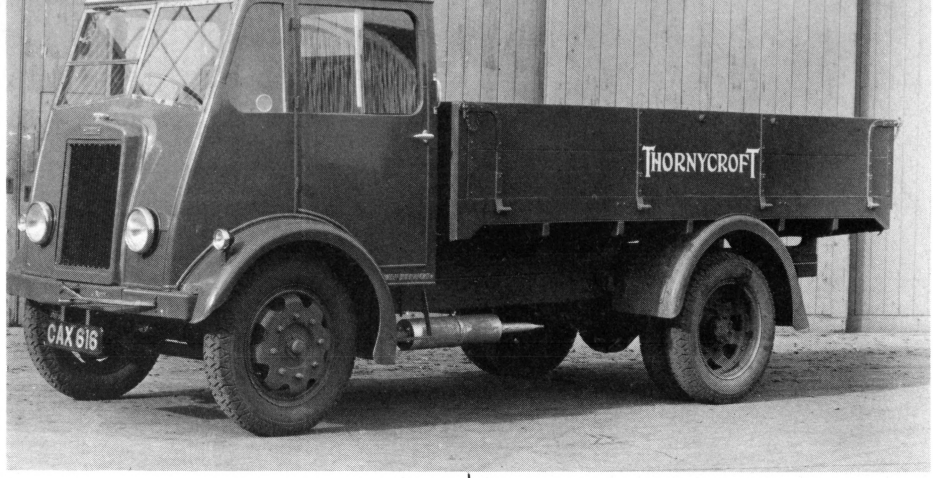
Just before the war I was doing a regular run with a new vehicle to Glasgow once a week. Some were good trips, some were bad, but you took them all in your stride, and if you did not do your job properly, you only had one chance and then you were out!

On one of the trips I was going up with a new DC type, that was the single-deck 32-seat bus chassis. My mate was following on a similar chassis, so we left Basingstoke in the morning and went on all through the day and night and got to Penrith the next afternoon about 5 o'clock. We put our chassis in a garage and went to Katelees, a marvellous place to spend the night. In the morning it was cold and frosty, so I asked my mate to hold the choke open while I leaned over and worked the accelerator and the starter. It ran for a minute and then stopped, so I asked my mate to repeat the process, when someone said they thought he was in trouble. What the silly fool had done, because the fan was not going (it was slipping on the belt), he had grabbed the belt to give it a turn and it had taken the tops off two of his fingers as they were trapped on the pulley. We went to a chemist in Penrith who bandaged them up, and he continued to drive to Glasgow — in pain. On the way back on the train he got no sleep and he walked up and down the corridor all night. But he was back at work in a day or so.

Sometimes going to Glasgow it was possible to put one chassis on top of the other, thus getting two there with only one driver! (economy rules!).

During the war we did all sorts of peculiar jobs including a lot of collecting supplies and materials from the Midlands. The trouble in wartime days was the headlamp masks and the covers over the side-lights, only allowing about a ¾in hole, which did not give much light, and you

Right:
In 1938 Thornycroft introduced a twin steering six-wheeler for 10 ton payloads. This is one of the first of the new chassis outside the works. *Ian Allan Library*



Right:
A Thornycroft Nippy lightweight 2/3 ton lorry used in their own fleet. *Ian Allan Library*

could literally run someone over before you saw them.

I remember the morning I got to Coventry after the big blitz and you could not get through the streets — it was a hell of a mess but there were a lot of birds flying around, canaries, budgerigars and chickens. I suppose they were in cages in places which had been bombed and suddenly found themselves free. Outside the place I was going to, there was a terrific big telegraph pole, which, I should think, connected half the lines in Coventry. A bomb had come down and hit it smack on the top, so all the wires were like a spaghetti bolognaise! Two men who were in boxes underneath got away with a few bruises — they were very lucky.

Coming back from London one night about 8 or 9 o'clock I could see a fire in front of me on the Harford Bridge Flats, which was then an aerodrome, so I wondered if it was an aircraft on fire and if I could get across. It turned out to be a demonstration of FIDO (Fog Intensive Dispersal Operation), which entailed setting fire to oil so that the heat would disperse the fog and keep the runways clear and give visibility for take-off and landing. It was a wonderful sight.

About this time, I remember going to Birdlip (Gloucester) where no one was allowed as it was all WD property, but we were delivering some army vehicles for the India Office. There were two of us, each with a vehicle but my mate had broken down, I forget why, and I was towing him. I stopped at the top of the steep hill down and said keep your brakes on, but as we got down there was a steamroller working there, and my mate was trying to overtake me — tow rope and all! I tried to keep in front, but he crashed into me. Fortunately, the damage was not too severe and we got away with it.

In the middle of the 1940s I had a regular job running to Honiton (Devon) every night for about three months, testing a new engine. I did from midnight until about 11.00am when I got back filled up with petrol and oil and it was ready to go off again with another driver from midday until 11.00pm, when I took over again at the bewitching hour. The engine barely stopped. We used to go via Salisbury, Blandford, Bridport, Axminster to Honiton then turn right and up through Ilminster, Ilchester, Wyle, Amesbury, Andover and back to Basingstoke. There was not much on the road at night in those days — except rabbits. I used to fill the spare wheel with rabbits that had been run over and take them back for the chaps at the works for a good meal — meat was still rationed in those days!

During my 40-odd years with Thornycrofts I did a lot of demonstration work all over the country, often spending a fortnight in one town, working all round that district. I would go to Birmingham, then on to Stoke-on-Trent (including going out to Oswestry), then on to Manchester, then to Leeds, on to Hull, up to Newcastle, from there to the Lake District and Carlisle, on to Glasgow, then pick up a salesman at Stirling and do Perth and Aberdeen, on to Kirkcaldy, etc. I used to come home for Easter and Whitsun and my summer holidays (with no pay), and as winter time approached it was on to Bristol and the South Wales area, then Plymouth and Exeter.

I remember one funny thing happened when I was staying at Stoke-on-Trent, for I had to go and do a demonstration for some miller and had to take a big RG type 10-tonner to Liverpool and pick up a load of grain from the docks. On the way back we called at a restaurant for lunch, and I had the boss as well as the prospective customer with me, when a chap came in and asked if it was our Thornycroft parked outside. He asked what it was like, and I said it was OK. Apparently he had just purchased an AEC and he said it was not good at all, and that was the machine our 'prospective' was thinking about. Naturally, we got an order right away!

Once I left my vehicle in Newcastle depot over the Easter holiday period and came home by train. I had to be back by the Tuesday afternoon, so I booked my return on the *Flying Scotsman*. When I got to King's Cross they told me the train was full up, but they could book me on the 11.00am, but that would not get me to Newcastle on time, so I said I would rather stand on the *Flying Scotsman*. I walked down the train and sure enough they were all reserved seats, but eventually I found one that was not and promptly sat on it. When the ticket collector came round near Peterborough he told me never book a seat, but give the station porter a couple of bob and he would find a seat!

I went to the Scottish Motor Show at Kelvin Hall, Glasgow as a demonstration driver with a rigid six-wheeler. One day the salesman came out with a dear old man who wanted a demo drive. The salesman told the customer he would be alright as our driver had passed his test in 1896! The old man laughed and climbed in. We set off and up Gardner Street which is more or less straight up after you had a slight run at it from the bottom, then it was straight through the box into 'creeper gear', and as you reached the top of this horrendous incline the front wheels were just off the ground. We were only half way up when the old man wanted to get out, but I said he must sit tight, although he was clearly worried. When we got back he said 'I don't care when you passed the test, but you can come and work for me anyday'.

Once in Leeds on a demonstration party, one of our 'toffey-nosed' salesmen came in and said what a marvellous meal he had earlier on in a transport cafe, of all places! So I said that they looked after the man on the road, and were not worried about the

Left:
A 2½ ton normal control lorry in the vicinity of the Snake Pass in 1934. *Ian Allan Library*

Left:
Unloading stores and spare parts delivered from Basingstoke at the London Service Depot in 1949. *Ian Allan Library*

likes of him. He got quite annoyed so I thought I must get one in on you, matey! So I said it was a funny thing but I heard about a commercial salesman who married a prostitute, and do you know within three months he had dragged her down as low as he was! He did not think it funny — some people have no sense of humour!

I had a good time on these demonstration trips, especially the five years before Thornycroft sold out to AEC, and I certainly saw the country in an easier way than when on long trunk runs or delivering a chassis! For example, when in Newcastle we used to go over to Keswick and stay there for a day or so, as one of the boats plying for hire across the lake had a Thornycroft marine engine in it. We used to make out we had to look it over and then get a free trip! The same thing happened at Chester where a chap there had a similar engine on his boat on the River Dee. I still smile about the time when they fitted the first recorder in a cab — an early edition of the modern tachograph — which recorded on a little paper disc, when you were moving and when you stopped. It was a Sunday and I was going to Peterborough and reached a cafe near there where I was going to spend the night. Parked outside was a large articulated tanker which had come up from London, and the windscreen wiper was going. As it was not raining, I thought it had been left on accidentally, so I went inside and asked who the driver was. A chap came forward, and I told him his wipers were on, and he replied that he hoped they were, as they were on the same circuit as his 'clock' and he would let them run for another hour or so. I thought he was a clever fellow!

I suppose during my years of driving, I have done a lot of 'favours' for various people, but sometimes they rebound. One of the chaps at the Basingstoke works had a brother who had a bit of a farm, and he wanted a cultivator collected from the Banbury area and it was 'arranged' that I would call and pick it up on my way back from a Manchester trip. When I got to Banbury and found the place, the man there said that as my truck was already half-loaded there would not be space for the machine and the spares, as they constituted almost a full load. Now my foreman was pally with the chap at our works and it was then arranged that on the next Manchester trip I would be returning empty and could collect from Banbury. I duly did this and got loaded with the cultivator, plough and many other bits and pieces. I took the load home, and next morning set off to find the farm, which I eventually did with difficulty, but there was no way of getting the machinery off the back of the lorry. Eventually I backed into the farm yard and they moved about 10 ton of manure behind the lorry to make a ramp so I could get the load off. I worked on shovelling the manure as well, and after about two hours we were able to get the machinery and all the heavy bits and pieces off my lorry. Having worked like a beaver, the crowning glory comes when the chap kindly gave me a tip — half-a-crown and a penny (13p). I might tell you I wished I had never seen the chap!

During the summer we had to take the cricket team, the hockey team and the tennis players all over the place to play away matches. One day I had to take our fire brigade down to Romsey for a big display, in the middle of which a big house not far away caught fire. Nearly all the firemen ran down there and in the local paper a day or so afterwards they said the visiting firemen had done more damage than the fire itself!

In the winter time we had to take the footballers out to their matches, and then afterwards they would often go on to a show, but as we only got paid for the journey time and no expenses, it was not a lot of good. I was never much of a sportsman myself — apart from fishing and shooting — and only saw one professional match, Southport *v* Chester (where I was staying), I thought it was a waste of money and have never been since.

At one time I had to lodge in Birmingham as I spent the time getting stuff from the foundries and putting some of it on the train, but on a Thursday I collected the bigger and heavier items and loaded up and came hot-foot home for the weekend. The trouble was I only had the 3-ton engine in the 5-ton lorry. On one occasion with a very heavy load I got to Long Compton where there is a moderately steep hill and got half way up and she would go no further. The only alternative was to turn round and the go up in reverse, for that gear was lower than first. I had to do the same with that little hill just on the north side of Woodstock.

One morning I was going off to Coventry and got just south of Reading with ice on the roads and came round a bend to find the local dustcart in the road. I slammed on my brakes and spun round and finished up facing the way I had come. A driver coming the other way started shouting and swearing, so I said its no use carrying on like that or we'll all get smashed up. The dustmen got together and got me out of the ditch and I went on my way. But the driver I had spun in front of called in at our house/shop to deliver biscuits and, white as a sheet, said to my wife and her mother 'I've just had a madman in a Thornycroft's lorry who spun in front of me and could have killed me'. When my wife informed him that it was her husband, he replied that he was a bigger fool than that! However, he was so nervous that when he came out of the shop with some biscuit tins he never looked where he was going and a car came down the hill and knocked the biscuit tins out of his hand! He was in such a state that they had to come out from Basingstoke with another driver to take over the rest of his round.

I have enjoyed looking back over the old days and hope it has interested readers; things have changed drastically, not always for the better. I remember the cafe at Bassetts Pole where you could get a lovely plate of steak and chips and a cup of tea for 1s 3d (6½p) and a small packet of five Woodbines was 2d, although I packed up smoking in 1950 when the price was not nearly as daft as it is now. Beer was 2d a pint and it was good stuff, not the chemical, gassy liquid you so often get today!

I am now 85 and still work my garden and saw wood for the fire, etc. I go to bed reasonably early, get up in the morning and work hard, and if you do that you can live for ever.

Below:
A preserved 1919 Thornycroft J type 4 ton lorry alongside a 1957 Swiftsure 6 tonner. *Ian Allan Library*

A BLACK COUNTRY BUS ROUTE

We're Going to the Zoo Midland Red Routes 244/5

John Reohorn

Above:
A typical FEDD (front entrance double-deck), BHA 332. This batch had Brush or Metro-Cammell 56-seat bodywork built in 1935/6. *Ian Allan Library*

'IS YOUR journey really necessary?' challenged the posters. If truth be told many were not, for even in wartime people sought enjoyment. The town of Dudley offered theatre, county cricket and zoo. A visit to any one of these was a diverting pleasure, but the journey alone offered sufficient excitement, for it was a ride on the Midland Red.

In local parlance one 'Got on a bus!' which was an accurate statement for most Black Country buses, with open rear platforms. Not on the Midland Red. With their buses one tended to get *in*. The two routes from Wednesbury to Dudley were operated exclusively by the SOS FEDD series which were in those days rare in being double-decked buses with front entrances.

Passengers entered by climbing up two steps, the word MIDLAND boldly inscribed on the riser, within what was an unusually wide vestibule. The bus interior was finished to a very high standard indeed. There was an air of quality which was heightened by the presence of vestibule doors; jacknife for one series, coach style sliders on the others. They were not power operated, indeed I cannot recall ever seeing one closed. Their purpose was, I believe, for use when running empty to and from duty, to bar entry to passengers, a function provided by a chain on the 'other buses'. The impression was one of quality not dissimilar to entering a well furnished parlour.

This image was perpetuated in the seats which had contoured top edges and were covered with warm-toned moquette in an abstract geometric pattern. On the lower deck this fabric was also applied to the trim panels and the whole effect was very comfortable. They were indeed quite warm buses which was surprising considering the permanently open front porch.

The front entrance layout produced some alluring features in the internal layout. There were no seats over the wheel arches, simply a single forward facing seat inboard of the wheels, in line with the aisle. These singles were not popular with alert small boys inquisitive of the passing scene, but when the buses were full, the wheelarches themselves could be used as an impromptu seat, very well suited to childish desires.

Below left:
Nearside view of a FEDD of the FHA series with Brush body built 1939. *Real Photographs*

Below right:
Offside view of the same type — FHA series. *S. E. Letts*

Because the stairs were located behind the driver and opposite the porch, the bell cord had to be located over the nearside seats in the reverse of normal practice. The cord itself was coyly threaded through lengths of tube neatly suspended from the ceiling, exposing short sections to the conductor's hand.

Upstairs, the most attractive feature was the four seater bench situated above the cab. The balustrading formed a kind of balcony isolating this seat from the remainder. This feature combined with the excellent all round view made it very popular with families. It was an exciting place to ride, second only to the upstairs rear seats for negotiating humped bridges or steep hills, features which predominate in the Black Country.

Both exist in quantity between Wednesbury and Dudley and the two routes traversed a good total. Route 244 operated Wednesbury, Great Bridge, Dudley and Cradley Heath, while 245 ran Wednesbury, Princes End, Dudley, Stourbridge. Fitting this information on to the destination blind was quite a feat.

Midland Red provision in this department was not better than the fashion of the day, but it was typically individualistic. The route numbers were displayed by stencil slides in a glazed rack below the upper deck front windows. Access for changing them was gained through a hatch in the upstairs front dash board. Below the stencils was a rectangular box for the destination blind. This was changed by the usual handle projecting from the canopy above the engine.

To get maximum information into the space the company resorted to splitting two lines on a diagonal. The top line stated destination and the bottom the diversion, prefixed with *via*. Thus in Wednesbury via Princes End, the *W* was full depth, but the following letters diminished until the *Y* which was half size. Similarly *via* was half size, increasing to a full sized *D*. By using this device and resorting to condensed lettering a great deal of information could be included, although passengers had to develop the knack of recognising the patterns as opposed to reading them.

The two journeys left Wednesbury by a common leg, diverged, met again, reached Dudly together, and finally went their separate ways. For some undefined reason 245 was preferred by the adults and this preference was transmitted, and remains. It seemed a little quicker, but in reality the journey times must have been very nearly equal.

The Midland Red stands at Wednesbury were situated in the High Bullen and the buses were parked facing northwards, up the hill. The crews were allowed a short rest period here. The service frequency was about 20-25min with the incoming bus timed to arrive just after the previous departure. Because the bus had to be parked unattended, each was equipped with a chock which the conductor placed behind the rear wheels before attending to nature's calls.

The prelude to departure was the conductor collecting this chock, walking to the front and tossing it with a resounding clang into the understair recess as he mounted the porch step. A quick two tugs on the bell or often a double tap on the bulkhead window alerted the driver and the distinctive SOS whine signalled actual departure. And the journey had begun.

It commenced by swinging to the right, around the public conveniences set in the centre of the quite wide road. Heading down the hill, crossing first the A41, then beneath the GWR main line by the steelworks quaintly known as The Patent Shaft and Axletree Company, across the Lea Brook and then up the steep and long hill, which climbed to Ocker Hill. Halfway up this bank one encountered a severe humped back canal bridge, which on the return journey provided roller coaster thrills.

At the top, near the power station, the routes diverged. 245 turned right, and passed through a desolate moonscape of derelict land bordered by the LMSR Princes End Branch on a precipitous embankment. Escape from this landscape lay up another steep winding hill which brought road and railway level. Near the top of this hill the road crossed a contour canal on another humped back bridge with an extremely frail-looking cast iron parapet. Again the return journey down this hill was the more exciting. From here to Dudley the route passed through an undulating built up area of houses and factories where some of the dips were certainly man-created. On the way the route crossed the LMSR Stour Valley line, yet another canal and passed the erstwhile Bean Motors factory, while parallel to the right lay the GW (oww) railway.

The other route (244) turned left by the power station and descended to Great Bridge. To enter that place the bus had in quick succession to cross the LMSR line on the level, and then pass beneath the GWR as both railways were converging to reach Dudley as a joint line. In the centre of Great Bridge, a pub stood, isolated, in the market square which the bus circumnavigated clockwise to depart on the road by which it arrived. In the process one might glimpse West Bromwich or Birmingham Corporation buses on their joint route 74.

Shortly after re-crossing the railways the bus turned left. It passed through an active and wide ranging industrial zone where many house-hold names *blazoned* the factories. The bus crossed more canals. Not for nothing was this area called the Venice of the Midlands. In Tipton town the bus sometimes had to wait at the level crossing on the LMSR Stour Valley line. By now, the line of the route was beginning to converge on 245. Suddenly at a T junction a left turn brought them together. Just before the Birmingham New Road, a 1938 dual carriageway, the routes crossed a weed covered canal which led into a derelict industrial site, destined to be amazingly transformed into the Black Country Museum. A straight run along Tipton Road in company with other routes brought the buses into Dudley proper, between cricket ground and station, to the unloading stop, which was unhappily placed just beyond the Midland Red garage.

Dudley was a grand place for buses, and other attractions. The zoo, the theatre, the stations, the county ground and the garage were all grouped at the foot of Castle Hill. A large number of local and through routes were channelled through this focal point, and on any one day one could expect to see a wide cross-section of the varied range of BMMO types then in operation. The local services around Dudley at that time were operated by the older rear-entrance REDD type. Although mechanically similar to the FEDD's (but with petrol engines) they were noticeably more antique in aspect and received our scant regard because of it.

In these wartime days to be interested in buses was a matter to be admitted cautiously, but kindred spirits will seek out their own. We were very ill-informed due to the absence of knowledgeable adult men or publishing. Thus observations from the Hippodrome queue, or the zoo terraces, of the endless procession of varigated red buses, not forgetting the blue 74s, was an exercise in pure aesthetics.

Below left:
One of three full-fronted FEDDs with Brush bodywork built in 1938, but rebuilt as a normal half-cab in 1940. This view shows the front 'porch' and the 'Midland' on the riser of the step to the saloon. *Ian Allan Library*

Below right:
The D5 type built in 1949 with Brush bodies and an open rear platform

Above:
The type AD2 built on a standard AEC chassis with Brush or Metro-Cammell 56-seat bodies to BMMO design.

Right:
A line up of Midland Red buses for route 125. Left to right — a D5; D7; GD6; AD2 and the front of a D9. *Michael Dryhurst.*

In the postwar years the *Ian Allan ABC's*, *Buses Illustrated*, and the erudite pages of *Commercial Motor* changed the situation. The revelation that Midland Red buses were not just different, but 'home-made' into the bargain, raised that company's esteem to unprecedented levels and that without knowledge of Trent, PMT or Northern General!

Apart from the occasional single-decker on relief duties the Dudley routes were the sole preserve of FEDDs all through the '40s. There were two basic types. The older, BHA registered 1936 series, had the angular radiators, with the splendid cast 'Midland Red' plate bolted to the header tank. These had the coach-type external sliding doors and the upper-deck front panelling was characteristically contoured. The newer EHA/FHA, registered, 1938 series had a nicely proportioned sleeker radiator and curved panels which gave them a more streamlined appearance. This was the version fitted with folding doors. In an age when streamlining was a design topicality, these buses met with childish adulation, but maturity and discernment led to an appreciation of the charm of the earlier style.

New developments, postwar, were awaited with anticipation. The great event, in the late '40s was a bitter-sweet offering. A few new buses began to appear on these routes. We admired the smooth rounded lines, faired-in radiator and wings. We liked the big new indicator panels and roller blind numerals. These were surmounted by an illuminated *Midland* panel, a typical piece of ostentation which met with unreserved approval. Inside, the push button bells and heating spelled modernity, but the open rear platform was a piece of reversion which was quite honestly a disappointment, declaring an ordinariness to be deplored. Eventual realisation that these first new buses were merely AEC Regents, surmounted by Midland designed bodies certainly took the gilt off the gingerbread. These were the AD2s and to be fair the second batch did have BMMO chassis, but they never really won our hearts, which was a pity because they set the seal on BMMO double-deck design for two decades.

Developed from them was the D5, in effect an 8ft wide version, and the D5, B. This introduced the travelling public to the power operated platform doors, one of the first applications. An offshoot of this innovation was the inclusion of a narrow emergency door in the rear panelling at the foot of the stairs, slightly reminiscent of the FEDD which went some way to redeeming the design. Interior finish was nice, although not quite so elaborate as the prewar vehicles.

In the future this feature also suffered. The 244/5 routes were seldom operated by the Guy Arabs, which were designated D6, so the following development was the D.7, a lightweight BMMO chassis fitted with all metal MCW Orion bodies having Midland fronts. The travelling public had to get used to exposed pop rivets, metal interior panels, and to the associated increase in noise levels. Informed opinion has it that this was a successful design but it was not one that I personally liked.

Shortly afterwards another sign of future trends appeared in the form of Leyland PD2s with standard Leyland bodies. The radiators were given a distinctive all over cowling designed by BMMO and bearing that legend in the same way as the indigenous designs. This echo of prewar Leyland indulgence was later offered to other operators. Thus for the first time the Dudley route was operated by non-standard buses. Shortly afterwards I left the district for some years, so I missed the introduction of the D9s. These integral construction buses were the last quantity production. They were distinctive, individualistic, nicely finished within and without, had many advanced features and were a worthy BMMO swan song. It is notable that NBC keeps one or two of them for special workings.

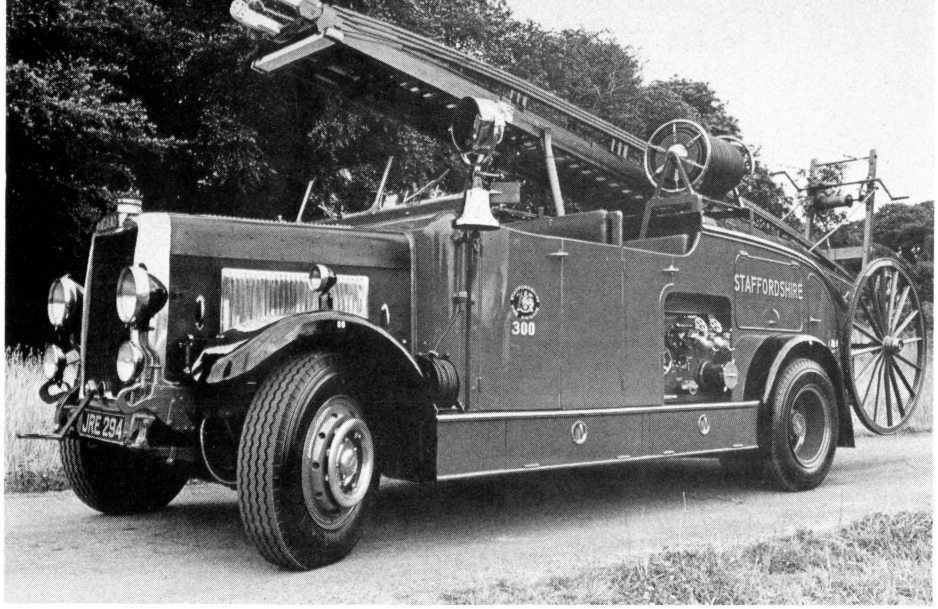
In the early '60s the Dudley route saw the very last BMMO revolution, the D10s. Only two were built and they worked the Dudley routes for a time. Being *underfloor engined double-deckers* they were very rare beasts indeed. In finish they owed much to the D9s and were lovely buses to ride. They worked out their final days on the Stafford to Dudley route, passing through Walsall and Wednesbury en route. What a pity the design was never perpetuated.

While the workshops went out in glory the commercial side began to decline after the war. The company lost its enviable reputation for speed and punctuality. The 4d fare to Dudley quickly became 5d and applications for fare increases came so fast that they became a bitter local joke. This tale was common enough, but in the Black Country, denied the degree of subsidy enjoyed by the Corporation services and being forced to operate alongside them, the Midland Red suffered the consequences of unfair comparison. A great many people still travelled and the company usually moved them, but I recall one dark winter's night being stranded in Dudley when the last FEDD could not take all the queue of late theatre goers. We got home courtesy of a passing motorist. It was increasing instances like this that encouraged the purchase of private cars. In the end formal nationalisation saved the old company from ignominy and the WMPTE took over the Black Country routes, running blue and cream D9s and ex-BMMO Fleetlines.

So it was that the Dudley route saw the whole gamut of livery styles. When new, FEDDs sported the lined red style, with white bands and silver roofs. Wartime expediencies eliminated the silver and white, but the gold lining remained until the utilitarian period coincidental with the D7s eliminated this also. The D9s had quite a lot of silvered embellishments which restored their dignity, and their maroon interiors blended pleasantly. Even so an SOS FEDD in full lining must remain the pinnacle of Midland Red smartness.

It is a pity that the FEDDs did not get preserved. They lasted long enough, well into the late '50s when they were 20plus years old, but the company had odd ideas about disposal. I believe that the engines were removed before the buses were dismantled, possibly overhauled, and then exported to China where they were apparently power plants for motor junks! Perhaps today that distinctive note drifts across the calmer reaches of the Yellow Sea giving a piquant new flavour to the term Red China!

Black Country Bus Route & Reminiscences of Walsall route 37/38 appeared in *VR* No 6.



Eveline -the restoration of a Leyland pump

John Wadey

IT WAS at the Stafford Town Council Fire Brigade Committee meeting of 27 April 1939 that 'Eveline' was first conceived. Minute No 28 of that meeting was for the committee to consider a report from the sub-committee relative to a tender received for a new fire engine to replace the large Leyland appliance purchased in 1913. Pursuant to Home Office instructions the 1913 appliance would be retained as a standby machine.

It was resolved that (a) a new appliance be purchased from Leyland with a pump capacity of 700/1,000gpm at a total cost of £1,652.10s and made up as follows:

Complete engine and wheeled escape as per quotation	£1,485. 0s.0d
First aid set operating through main pump	65. 0s.0d
Frances 11in Searchlight	37.10s.0d
Three way collecting breeching	15. 0s.0d
Breathing Apparatus lockers	10. 0s.0d
Finish all brass exposed parts to be chrome plated	40. 0s.0d
Total	£1,652.10s.0d

and (b) that application be made to the Minister of Health for consent to borrow money.

At the Meeting of the Town Council on 8 June 1939, Minute No 42 referred . . . that the Town Clerk was in receipt of the Minister of Health sanction for £1,653 in respect of the above. It was further revealed that the Borough Coat-of-Arms would be painted on the vehicle at a cost of £14.

Finally the great day arrived. It was 1 January 1940 and the venue was the Market Square, Stafford. It was with much pomp and ceremony that the 1939 Leyland Hippo Pump/Escape JRE 294 was christened. The Mayoress, Mrs Eveline Joynes conducted the ceremony by breaking a bottle of Champagne over the starting handle of the engine and so christened her 'Eveline', after her own name, which was inscribed upon the chrome-plated brass bell. And so Eveline was born.

It was not long before the first mishap occurred. Upon delivery to the engine house, Eveline was found to be too large to fit the engine house bay. Therefore the appliance was temporarily parked at Goal Square Garage until the bay had been widened.

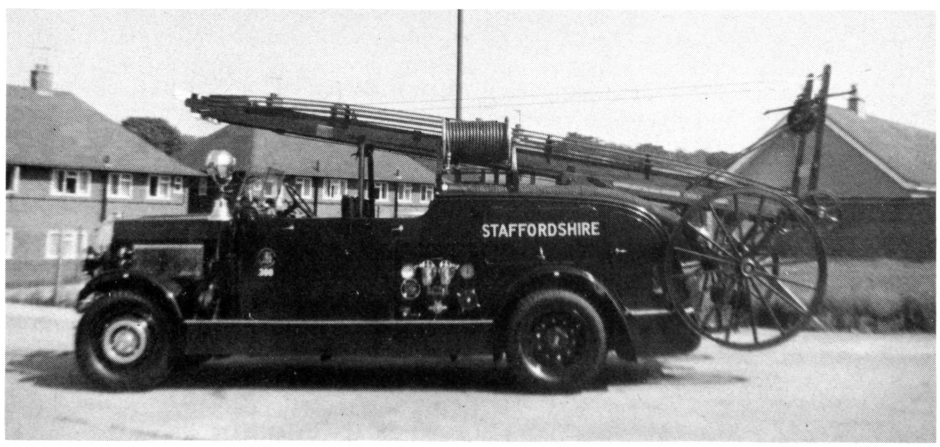
Driver S. Salmon was sent by Leyland's when delivering the machine and was seconded to the Stafford Borough Fire Brigade for six weeks as engineer and driver. He was the only person allowed to drive to fires or other calls for the six weeks until the other drivers had been trained.

Although delivered to Stafford Borough Council, it was not very long (in 1941) before she served under the National Fire Service (NFS) for the duration of the war. She returned in 1947 to the new Stafford Council Council and, in 1954, was transferred to Cheadle, where she stayed until 1963, the later part of her life there as a spare appliance. She attended her last fire at the Old Bakery in Cheadle in 1963, when her five man crew slipped the escape and placed it against the chimney to extinquish the fire, and used most of her 240ft hose reel in so doing!

And so at the end of that year she was sent to Kidsgrove for storage where she lay for many years — forgotten and neglected. Happily the story does not end here, in fact it is really just beginning.

In June 1971 a new boy was posted to Kidsgrove Fire Station. Bob Hinton had joined the London Fire Brigade a few years earlier, but although from the East End of London, Bob had a feeling for the country life and so transferred to the Staffordshire Fire Brigade. Now being an alert and inquisitive chap, it was not long before he discovered what lay hidden in the garage over the other side of the yard. However, his initial enthusiasm was mainly met with general disinterest or comments like: 'Oh! That old thing'.

Not to be deterred, Bob took quite a liking to *Eveline*, and on closer examination he found that perhaps things were not quite so derelict as first appeared, despite flat battery, flat tyres and a coating of dust and dirt.



Bob started by borrowing some of the smaller pieces from the appliance, like delivery outlets, and fittings which could be unbolted, taking them home, where after a few hours of dedicated cleaning he found they came up quite well. That was the spark that saw the fire!

Bob then approached his Station Officer, Chris Renshaw, for permission to renovate and rebuild *Eveline* in his own time. This met with the Station Officer's approval for he contacted the Divisional Officer, John Smith, who paid a visit to Kidsgrove and after speaking with Bob Hinton decided it was a worthwhile project.

Later the Divisional Officer spoke to Chief Officer Blacktop regarding the interest of restoring *Eveline*, and he, with his Staff Officer, visited Kidsgrove and after consultation with Bob, the Station Officer and the Divisional Officer, it was decided that the Brigade would afford all the facilities and help it could provide for the restoration project.

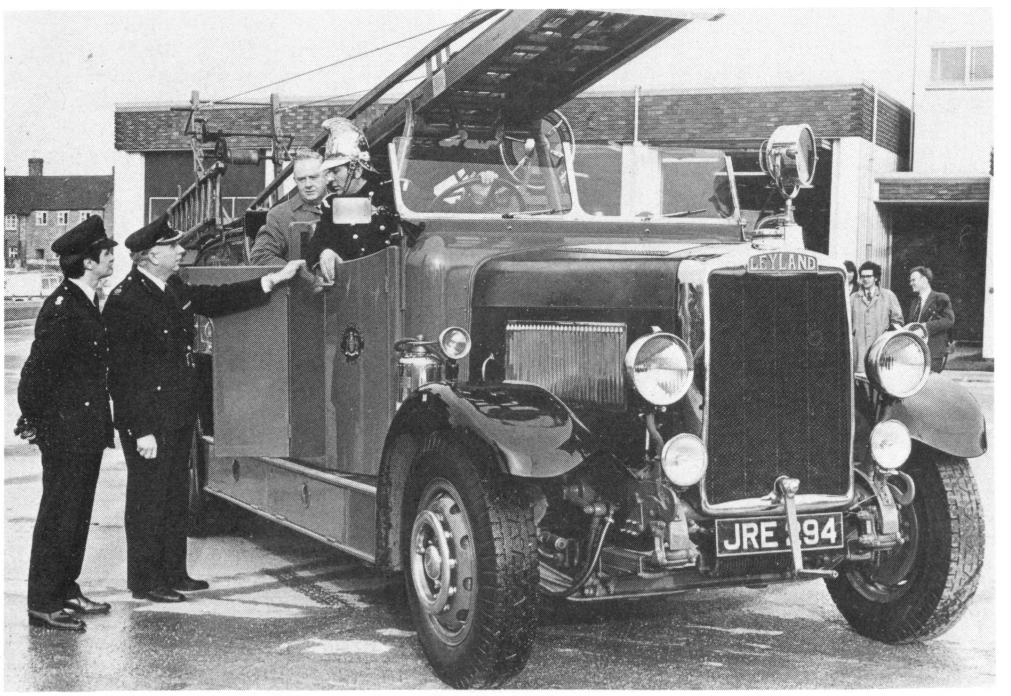
Work started eagerly with a body clean up including a repaint using Tekaloid coach enamel and no snags were encountered. The next move was the engine itself, and as it was a non-runner the workshops purchased a new battery (costing £28 at 1971 prices) but still the engine would not start. Bob removed the plugs and took them to a local garage proprietor, Peter Bond. The plugs were the old Lodge 18mm type and when tested were found to be unserviceable. Fortunately, Peter Bond had an old Austin 14 in his garage from which he removed four Lodge plugs of the correct type. Fitted to *Eveline* she fired first time — after many years of lying dormant. However she ran very rough to start with, but after cleaning all the ignition and the fuel system she began to run quite smoothly. The workshops then supplied all the 18mm plugs they could find!

The next problem turned out to be the tyres, for while on a test run two tyres burst! It was found that the walls of the Dunlop 36 by 7 tyres had rotted. Both Dunlop and Michelin was approached for assistance, but the size was now obsolete and unobtainable. Michelin advised that the only solution they could find was to manufacture special wheels. This was agreed and they made two special wheels converting two continental style 10-stud heavy wheels in half section, and welding the two half sections together to form one deep walled wheel, which could then be fitted with a modern 8.25 by 20 tyre. The cost of over £700 was generously paid by the Brigade. Avon Radial tyres were then fitted.

Next in the cycle was the seats. The rexine seats had perished and it was decided to send the appliance to a local upholstery firm in Stafford for new seats in red leather. The bonnet meantime had been sent to a firm in Birmingham to be gun-blued.

With the bonnet in Birmingham and the appliance in Stafford, work was commenced on the Morris-built escape ladder. With the approval of the Chief Officer, 20 junior firemen of the Stafford Brigade were seconded to Kidsgrove to work on the escape. The escape was completely dismantled and each lad was issued with glass and sandpaper and set about scraping and sanding down. Bob meanwhile took care of the revarnishing. The escape line was washed and bleached, but the extend cables were found to be in perfect order with no kinking or needling. As for the 20 junior firemen, they all thoroughly enjoyed it, and learnt more about how an escape works in a week than many weeks in a classroom could have taught them.

The final job was the main pump. This was completely dismantled, cleaned and serviced, a job which took a fortnight. Although leaking locally at first, once the glands were thoroughly sealed all was found to be in order. The restoration was now complete.



This takes us to 31 January 1973 and *Evelines* big day. Bob took her to the Staffordshire Fire HQ to show her off in front of BBC and ATV cameras in a local news programme. And what a beauty she looked!

The next event that year was at the County Showground to compete in the Midland Steam Rally. What a day that turned out to be, for *Eveline* won the *Rugeley Times* Trophy for the Best Historic Fire Engine; the Best Show Vehicle; the Show Champion Special Plaque, to commemorate first time out; and she also won £5, which was donated to the Fire Brigade Benevolent Fund. It was a very proud Bob Hinton who took her back to Kidsgrove that evening!

Following that success she was seen regularly at Fetes, Borough Shows, Carnivals, Flagdays and at Fire Displays in the county.

However, fire service life being what it is, the time came in 1974 for Bob to leave Kidsgrove when as promotion to Leading Fireman he was posted to Cannock station. Although he took *Eveline* with him, his promotion in 1977 to Sub Officer proved to be too much to devote enough time to *Eveline*, so she was left to the mercy and attention of the men at Lichfield fire station, where she went to even greater glories. At a big Steam Traction and Vintage Rally and Show in 1977, *Eveline* walked away with Best Historic Fire Engine; Supreme Champion; Champion of Champions and the Best in Show Award. What an accolade to all the hard work involved.

In 1978/9 *Eveline* was still at Lichfield and shown annually in June at the Lichfield Bower Days. She is much loved and is pride of the Staffordshire Fire Brigade. (Her present whereabouts is not accurately known. – Ed.)

But for the foresight, enthusiasm and sheer hard work of Bob Hinton, the understanding and approval of the Chief Officer, the facilities and advice of the workshops, and the financial help of the Brigade, we would not have *Eveline* today.

My sincere thanks to Bob Hinton for relaying this information to me over many pleasant pints we shared recently at the Fire Services Technical College.

Specification

Leyland Hippo Pump Escape JRE 294 *Eveline*. Built Chorley, Lancs 1939.

Engine: Petrol. Six cylinder, 4.56in bore by 5.5in stroke. 8,847cc.

Gears: Four forward plus one reverse.

Escape: Morris trussed escape with push-on mounting.

Pump: Double acting reciprocating primer. Capacity 1,350gpm. Knock-off valves and screw deliveries, four deliveries (two either side).

Electrics: Dual ignition. Magneto (advance and retard) plus AC Delco coil.

Equipment: First aid hose reel and 25gal tank. Jump sheet and short extension ladder.

In Days of Yore

Apprenticeship Days Recalled

Frank Tinsdale

THE WORKSHOP was a rectangular building lying parallel to the short cul-de-sac of Dunedin Street but separated from it by the yard. In the yard stood the small modern offices of the depot manager and, in times of peace, the sales staff. A high wall extended from each side of the offices, the left side broken by the big wooden gates giving access to the Workshop. At this entrance was a high orange and black enamelled metal sign which proudly proclaimed

ALBION MOTORS LTD.
EDINBURGH SALES AND SERVICE DEPOT.
MANUFACTURERS OF PASSENGER AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES.
BY APPOINTMENT — SUPPLIERS TO HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI.

It was November, 1940. I was 16 years old and it was the first day of my apprenticeship as a motor engineer.

Albion was the only surviving motor manufacturer in Scotland. Formed in the 1890s, the company had made the sensible decision at the turn of the century to concentrate on the production of commercial vehicles including buses and now their products were familiar throughout the world. On roads everywhere, one saw the distinctive aluminium radiator with its 'Rising Sun' emblem and the company motto, 'Sure as the Sunrise' which reflected the reputation for general excellence which Albion had gained. The term 'Clyde-built' meant quality in those days and was particularly appropriate in Albion's case since their main factory at Scotstoun stood on the banks of Glasgow's famous river.

It was a cold, wet morning as I stood in the office of the workshop manager, Mr McFarlane, or 'Mac' as he was known. A kindly, efficient man, he stood no nonsense but wisely left shop-floor discipline largely in the hands of the foreman, Ben Saddler. Ben was a short, rotund figure whose baldness was always hidden under a flat cap. His constant expression 'Jeest, Ah dinnae ken' covered a multitude of needs and occasions!

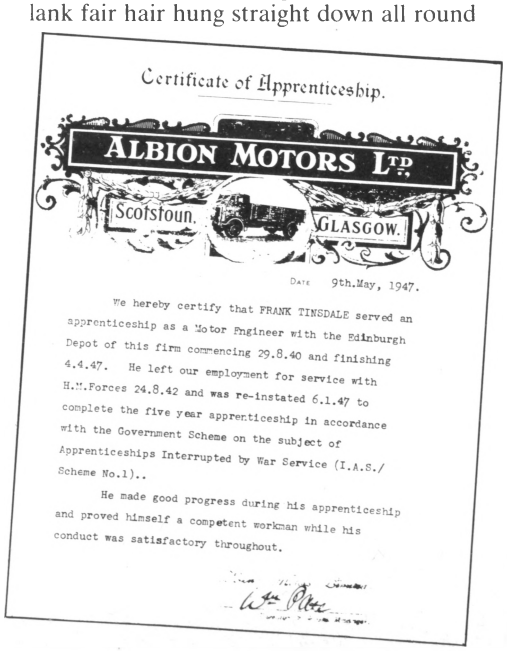
After a homily from Mac on the need for diligence, respect for my elders, the need to get good marks at night school and a warning not be led astray by the older apprentices, I agreed that I would indeed become a paragon of all virtues and Mac sent for Ben. Explaining that my wages of 7/6d (37½p) for the 5½-day, 48-hour week would be paid in arrears, Ben led me off to the Tool Store where I would spend the first three months of my five-year apprenticeship.

Entering the store, a tall, good-looking lad with a grin on his face came forward. 'You must be the new laddie' he said, 'I'm George, George Murray'. Ben introduced us, telling me that I would share the tool store duties with George for a week or so until I got the hang of things.

'An' dinnae think ye're baith goin' tae spend yer time in chattering like a couple o' wee lassies', he warned 'Ye're here tae work an' Ah'll see that ye dae!' Ben collected some new job cards from his desk in the store and departed.

George took my arm 'Dinnae pay any attention tae Ben. He's a miserable auld beggar at times!' George spoke again. 'D'you like cream cakes?' It seemed a strange question but I admitted I did. 'Right' said George, 'wait 'til Wullie's been in and I'll share one with you but no a word tae Wullie mind. Here he comes noo.'

I turned to see a tall, gangling youth of about 19 enter the store. His brown overalls seemed too big for him and his lank fair hair hung straight down all round his head, almost to his eyes. All in all, Wullie gave the impression of being only partially in control of his movements. Under his left arm he carried a small leather attache case which he deposited on the bench seat in the store, giving me only a cursory glance as he passed. 'Whae's this!' he asked as he turned to face us. 'It's the new laddie' answered George, 'his name's Frank.' 'Cissie name' commented Wullie and without further word, he pushed past us and made his way back to the workshop. George was already seated on the bench and opening the clasps on the attache case. 'Which one shall we have?' he queried. In the open case, packed in waxed paper which George had carefully unwrapped lay three cream cakes. A packet of sandwiches lay alongside with a Thermos flask. 'Quick' said George, 'before Ben catches us.' I chose the largest and after closing the case, George cut the cake with a knife made from a ground-down hacksaw blade. While we enjoyed the treat, George explained between mouthfuls. 'Wullie's mother aye packs him three cream cakes wi' his lunch but he disnae ken I hae one o' them every mornin' so he thinks there' aye two! Dinnae let him catch ye though, he goes real mad when he gets a temper on!' I was beginning to like George!



Certificate of Apprenticeship.

ALBION MOTORS LTD.

Scotstoun. GLASGOW.

Date 9th.May, 1947.

We hereby certify that FRANK TINSDALE served an apprenticeship as a Motor Engineer with the Edinburgh Depot of this firm commencing 29.8.40 and finishing 4.4.47. He left our employment for service with H.M.Forces 24.8.42 and was re-instated 6.1.47 to complete the five year apprenticeship in accordance with the Government Scheme on the subject of Apprenticeships Interrupted by War Service (I.A.S./ Scheme No.1)..

He made good progress during his apprenticeship and proved himself a competent workman while his conduct was satisfactory throughout.

It was the practice at Albion for new apprentices to spend three months in the tool store followed by a further similar period in the spares store. In this way, the newcomer gained a knowledge of tools and components and their names and uses before he began his real craft training. Unlike me, George had joined Albion when he was only 15 and so he had already spent periods of time in both stores. Now, he was anxious to get started in the works on what he considered 'real' work. He intended I should be fit to take his place

with the minimum of time and so, without further ado, he began to show me his domain.

The tool store carried all the drills, taps and dies needed in the shop as well as a myriad other tools. Huge dumbell spanners hung on the walls along with a set of ring spanners. Mechanics in the early 1940s couldn't afford the selection of tools owned by today's fitters and so ring spanners, files and similar tools were stocked for issue as required. Open-ended and box spanners were the order of the day. Wooden compartments held such things as split pins, washers and the like and these small items were meticulously booked out against the appropriate job number for charging on the invoice. Special tools including pullers and extractors as well as electric drills, blowlamps and hydraulic jacks were also issued as required.

Our inspection finished, George explained some of the systems used and the other duties which were the lot of the tool store apprentice. With Ben's reluctant agreement, we set off on a tour of the workshop for me to be introduced to the staff who would be my workmates in the days to come. A variety of lorries and vans stood around the 'shop, some straddling the inspection pit which lay parallel to the bench lying under the big windows. Mechanics and apprentices were at work on various components and at one end, a curly-haired mechanic (we never used the term 'fitter') was fitting big-end bearings. I watched fascinated as 'Curly' scraped the white metal bearing then tried it on the shaft journal already marked with blue to show up any high spots. Nearby, another mechanic was also using blue marker to fit a crown wheel to a differential unit, checking that the wormshaft was meshing correctly with the wheel. Down in the pit, sumps and gearboxes were being removed, clutches taken out for relining and on a half-cab coach belonging to Baxter's of Fife, an apprentice was seated on the nearside wing grinding in valves with a handbrace. Further along, a complete front axle was clamped in a vice, the hubs being dismantled by a thin mechanic apparently oblivious to the cigarette smoke rising up around his eyes as he leant over the work, the fag-end wreathing his face in a blue cloud.

Against the far wall of the workshop stood a six-wheeler of Danskin's Transport, the rear of the vehicle supported by steel stands and the two axles lying in a patch of dried mud where they had been lowered. Squatting beneath a rear wing, an older apprentice wielded a hammer and chisel as he tried to split the nuts rusted on to the spring pins.

George showed me how to serve the mechanics and apprentices calling at the tool store and as each one indulged in easy repartee with my new friend, I felt very much my 'new boy' status. The afternoon saw me handling some simple requests without too much help from George and I began to look forward to the day when I would know what I was doing and be left in charge of this small but important section. Pride comes before a fall though and soon after I learned that a lad asking for 'a bastard file' was not using foul language, I fell for the inevitable trick played on all tiros.

Above:
An Albion 15 ton eight-wheeler supplied in 1939 to an Edinburgh based public works contractor. With an Albion EN 242 engine the unladen weight was 67ton 13cwt 2qr.

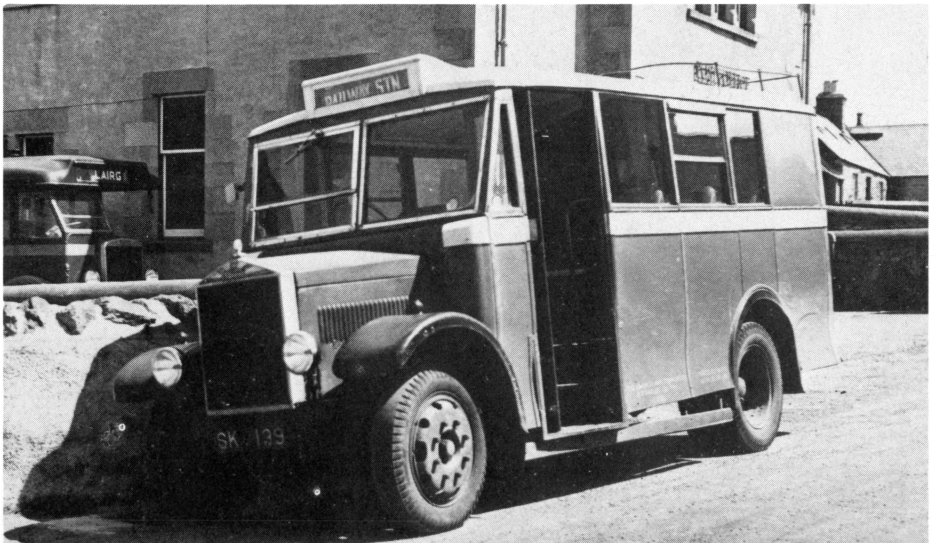
A mechanic, Abel Macdougall, came and asked for a box of 'revs'. George had absented himself so that Abel had a clear field and I was panic-stricken, especially since Abel appeared to be getting bad-tempered about my inability to find the wretched things. Being told to get a move on and bring them out to job number 356, I searched high and low but to no avail. Ben came in and in desperation, I told him of my failure. Obviously, he *did* have a sense of humour because he instructed me I had better go to Abel and explain my inability to perform such a simple request. As Ben said, I could only learn through experience and *he* wasn't going to make things easier for me! Shame-faced, I went into the 'shop. Abel was at the bench with a number of others and so I had to admit my defeat in public. The roar of laughter when I spoke was mortifying and I could feel myself blushing but one of the older mechanics took pity on me and told me how I had been fooled. Humbled, I retreated to the store to find George splitting his sides. From him, I learned that the correct response to such a silly request was to advise the person concerned that he would find the revs at the long stand at the other end of the workshop!

By 5 o'clock, the counter on the lower half of the stable door of the tool store was becoming cluttered with returned tools, most of them filthy with grease and mud. With George's help, I cleaned the tools off at the paraffin wash and at last, the gong sounded, heralding 5.30pm, and the end of my first day in the commercial vehicle industry.

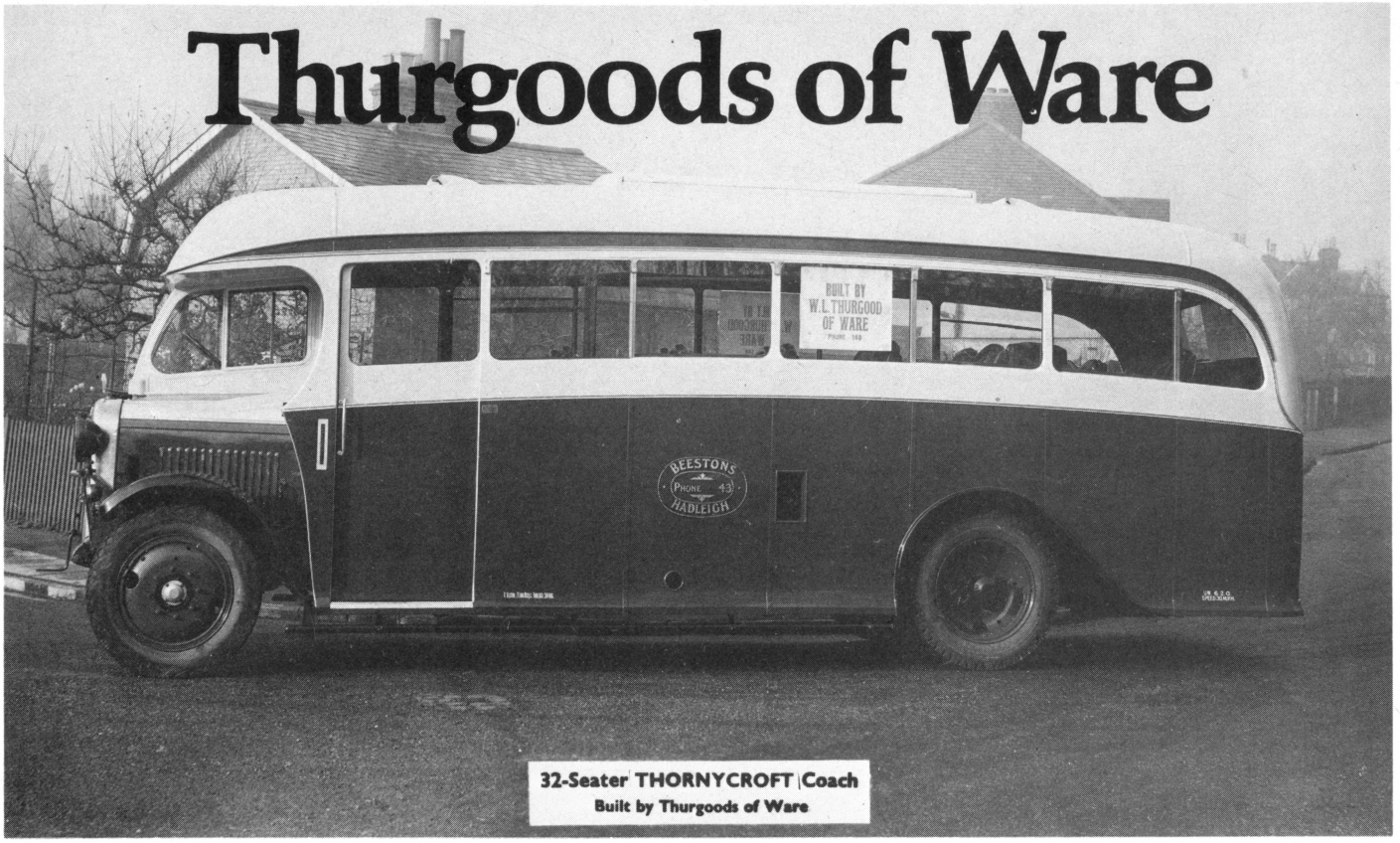
Dirty but happy, I washed my hands using a mixture of sawdust and soft soap to scrub off the oily grime. Clocking off was a novelty which soon faded and at home, my father smiled when I told him of the day's adventures including the episode of the 'revs'.

'Show them you can take a joke and you'll be all right' he advised. 'Mind you, if any of them try to 'initiate' you, don't hesitate to kick them where it hurts!' I didn't really know what he meant and he wouldn't go into details but I was to find out! I did kick someone where it hurt and strangely enough, from that moment on, I became accepted. Truly, I had begun my apprenticeship but I was to learn a great deal more than 'motor engineering' from Albion's Edinburgh Depot. I learned to grow up!

Below:
This 12 seater Albion bus was operated by the Sutherland Trading and Transport Co (Lairg) Ltd. The rear portion is partitioned off and used to carry mails and parcels, access being gained from the rear of the vehicle.



Thurgoods of Ware



32-Seater THORNYCROFT Coach
Built by Thurgoods of Ware

A Hertfordshire bodybuilder

Richard Storey

THE EVOCATIVE article by R. R. Moore on Brentwood's traffic (*VR* No 5) brought to mind this Hertfordshire coach-builder whose customers included numerous Home Counties and East Anglian operators. Pardoxically, it was an error in one of the captions which prompted this recollection: the smart Bedford OB of Rose Brothers' Primrose Coaches, KVW 60 (page 17) carried coachwork by W. L. Thurgood Ltd of Ware, not a Duple 'Vista' body. Differences between the two body styles on this chassis include the shape of the name and destination indicators and the absence on the Thurgood body of the strong moulding which sweeps back from the front windows on the Vista. Rose Brothers of Chelmsford would have been natural customers of Thurgood since they were located only about 30 miles from the Ware coachworks. Other Thurgood-bodied vehicles in their fleet included a pair of Leyland Comets, (fleet Nos 15-16) and a Commer Avenger REV 330 (fleet No 18).

It was the writer's good fortune to be able to visit the Thurgood works as a schoolboy from time to time in the early 1950s, and he still has a notebook recording some of these visits, as well as vivid memories of new vehicles, resplendent in the traditional hand-lettering applied by Thurgoods' coach-painter, Mr Woodhouse (the number plate of KVW 60 in the illustration has a typical Thurgood appearance). There were also rebuilds, sometimes after accidents, and numerous second-hand vehicles to be recorded, representing Thurgoods' regular trade in used buses and coaches. The standard account of the business is that given by G. R. Mills in *Buses* 206 and 216; the present writer has an entry on Walter Thurgood in volume five of the *Dictionary of Business Biography* (1986).

Mr Moore concluded that soon after the war nationalisation brought 'a horrible sameness to the transport scene'. This may have become true as far as the larger operators were concerned, but even such undertakings as London Transport or Eastern Counties still showed interesting diversity in the 1950s. In the case of private hire and country independents variety was definitely still the spice of life in the early 1950s, as visits to Thurgoods confirmed.

For the benefit of readers a 'potted' history of Thurgoods of Ware is given below. For a fully detailed history we recommend the article by G. R. Mills which appeared in *Buses* No 206 (May 1972) and No 216 (March 1973) from which this material has been extracted.

Mr W. L. Thurgood founded his own business in 1925 in Church Street, Ware in premises formerly used by the Phoenix Coach Works, where he was a foreman until they went into liquidation.

The first all-wooden body was built on a 25cwt Morris chassis and sold to an operator in Warrington in 1926. The next body was a 14-seater on a Chevrolet chassis for an operator in Northampton.

Above:
A Thurgood 32 seat body built on a Thornycroft chassis for Beestons of Hadleigh, Suffolk.

Above right:
A typical example of the Thurgood design for the popular Bedford OB chassis.

Right:
This 28 seat Thurgood bodywork hides a Guy Otter chassis. The vehicle was produced for Sams Coaches of Hoddesdon, Herts in 1950.

Below right:
An Austin coach with Thurgood body seen in Guernsey. *Stephen Morris*

Thurgood entered bus operation himself and formed the People's Motor Services in 1927, and naturally used his own products for the short lived company serving an approproximate 12-mile radius from base, extending to Royston in the north, Bishops Stortford in the west, Epping in the south and Stevenage to the east. The fleet reached a total of 21 two-tone brown liveried vehicles, but he sold out to Overington & Randall who were acquired by the London Passenger Transport Board in December 1933.

In the 1930s the small bus operator flourished as did the Bedford WLT with the patent Thurgood sliding head body. In 1931 over 50 bodies were completed, and later in that decade production increased and larger bodies were built on a variety of chassis including Leyland Tiger TS1. At that time among the many customers were

26-Seater Bedford Streamlined Coach

O. A. Bartle & Sons of Potton; Dengate's of Beckley, Sussex; Enterprise & Silver Dawn; Essex County Coaches; Hicks of Braintree; Red Rover of Aylesbury (a pair of Dennis Arrows, two Lancets and two Aces) and Trimdon Motor Services.

During the war contracts from the MAP (Ministry of Aircraft Production) and the WD (War Department) were received and Thurgoods made part of the framework and bulkheads for the DH Mosquito aircraft. In October 1940 a bomb demolished the factory, but it was rebuilt by the employees in a space of only five months.

No bus bodies were constructed from February 1941 to December 1945, but then production recommenced with many bodies for the Bedford OB chassis from 1946, while a good business was being undertaken in refurbishing old bodies or providing new ones on old chassis — all caused through the wartime and subsequent shortages. In 1948 a total of 90 bodies were built — 30 of them on Bedford OBs. Among the postwar customers were Guernsey Motor Co; Isle of Man Motors; Evan-Evan Tours of London; Seamarks of Luton and Trimdon Motor Services.

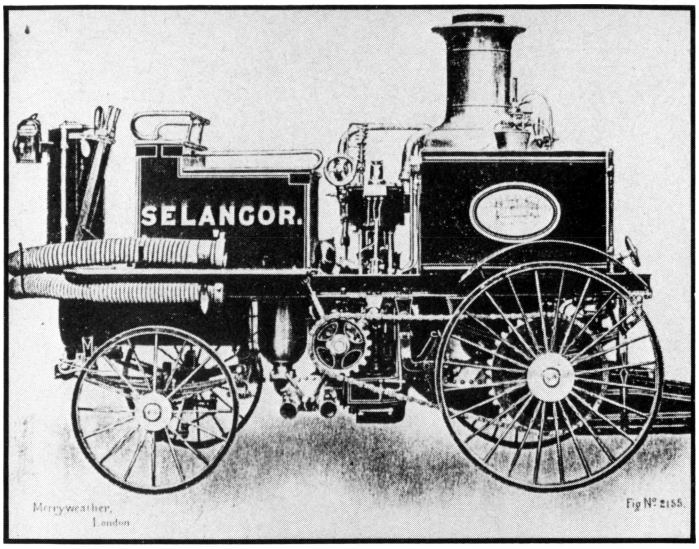
The business began to wane in the late 1950s although larger and better premises had been acquired at Widbury Hill, Ware in 1953, and although continuing to provide first class hand-built bodies on a variety of chassis most orders were 'one-offs' — a sign of the state of the bus industry at that time.

Finally Thurgood sold the business in 1967 to Plaxtons of Scarborough and today the premises at Ware form the Southern Area Service Depot for Plaxtons.

S. W. S-S.

Fire King

Self-propelled steam fire engines



David Gould

FOR SEVERAL decades, horse drawn steam fire engines with their horses galloping, brass helmeted crews clinging to the sides and smoke belching from the chimney, were an impressive spectacle as they raced at full speed to a fire.

A number of these superb machines are now in preservation and can often be seen at rallies. However, the use of self-propelled steam fire engines lasted only a short time and only a relatively small number were built.

There were many experimental designs of self-propelled steamers but it was not until the latter part of the 19th century that reasonably reliable machines were produced. The most successful of the British designs was Merryweather's 'Fire King'. But, before this engine was in production, a patent has been granted for the design of a fire pump driven by an internal combustion engine. A development which was soon to seal the fate of steam powered fire pumps.

The first self-propelled steam fire engine is reported to have been built in New York in 1840 by Paul R. Hodge. It weighed just over 2 tons and with horizontal boiler and cylinders it closely resembled a railway engine of that time. When pumping, the large rear wheels of the engine were jacked up clear of the ground to act as flywheels. The two steam cylinders were 9in diameter with a 14in stroke. The pump cylinders of 8½in diameter and with a 14in stroke were fitted horizontally in front of the steam cylinders. A large air vessel to even out the pulsing pump output was mounted in front of the smoke box door. Paul Hodge who originally came from St Austell emigrated to America but returned to Britain in 1850 to continue his engineering inventions.

An English self-propelled fire pump was built in 1862 by William Roberts who was a managing foreman at the chain cable and anchor manufacturers of Brown, Lennox & Co in Millwall. This machine of over 7 tons ran on three wheels and was named 'Princess of Wales'. The single front wheel of the engine was used for steering and a large chain coupled the drive to the rear pair of wheels. As well as a pump, this machine was also provided with an auxiliary pulley to drive other equipment. With a full load of 40gal of water the engine is reported to have averaged 12mph and to have been capable of a top speed of 18mph.

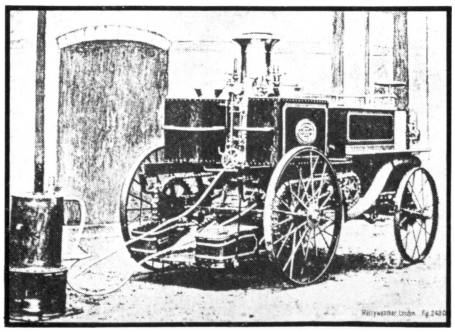
A patent by Daimler in Germany in 1889, brought the first successful production of a fire pump driven by an internal combustion engine. After seeing the potential of the Daimler design, other engineers began to experiment with petrol powered fire pumps. However, steam was still regarded as the most reliable form of propulsion and steam fire engine building was the consuming interest of the British manufacturer James Compton Merryweather.

He decided that his 'Greenwich Gem' horse drawn steam fire engine could be converted to self-propulsion by adding a drive connection from the pump engine to the rear wheels and by installing steering gear. The first drawings of the proposed conversion were produced in the spring of 1898.

Above:
A Fire King (Mugitus model) with oil burner, wrought iron wheels, gong and lamps supplied to Selangor, Straits Settlements at a cost of £1,075.

The first purpose-built Merryweather self-propelled steamer, the first 'Fire King', was completed in 1899. It is strange that this first engine was not purchased by a British brigade but was built for use in Mauritius. However, following the success of this first engine, the production of self-propelled steamers expanded rapidly. By 1902 Merryweather delivered the last horse drawn engine to the London Fire Brigade and almost all production was concentrated on the 'Fire King'.

As originally planned, the 'Fire King' design was based on the successful and reliable 'Greenwich Gem' horse drawn steamer. But the pump could be thrown out of gear and the drive connected to the rear wheels by a counter shaft and chain. Six sizes of engine were produced with pumping capacities of between 300 and 1,000 gallons of water a minute. Each size of engine was offered in many varied forms; coal or oil burning, equiped with wooden or iron wheels and either rubber, steel or iron tyres. Each size and type of engine had its own name or, as Merryweather put it in their catalogue, 'code word'. There were 24 names in all from 'Mobilis' with a 300gal capacity pump, coal burning furnace, wooden wheels and steel or iron tyres, to 'Multiforus' with a



Left:
A 'Multigenus' model of the Fire King with wrought iron wheels and petroleum heater for the engine to burn coal or wood fuel, as supplied to Bassein in Burmah.

Right:
A Mobor model with oil burner, also artillery type wheels with rubber tyres and costing £1,200. It was supplied to Santiago, Chile.

Left:
Fitted with a 400gpm pump this Mucro model of the Fire King was supplied to the Brighton Fire Brigade.

1,000gal capacity pump, wrought iron wheels and steel or iron tyres. Prices ranged from £850 for a 'Mobilis' to £2,275 for a 'Multiforus'. Metal wheels were an export option recommended for hot climates to combat the threat of attack by termites. With a turnout in under 90sec and a top speed of 30mph, a Fire King must have been a very impressive addition to many fire departments throughout the world.

Merryweather's patent water tube boiler could raise steam in six to eight minutes from cold. But, if an immediate turnout was essential, the engine could be kept in steam at low pressure by a small gas flame or separate oil burning heater. Steam for an alarm call could then be raised in about a minute. A coal burner could be fitted to the engine but the makers strongly recommended the use of the more convenient oil burner which raised steam more quickly, produced no smoke and did not soot up the boiler tubes. As the engine travelled to a fire the draught introduced to the burner by the forward motion increased the heat of the furnace and within five minutes a full pressure of 120psi was available to operate the pump.

The vertical double cylinder steam engine was mounted on a motion plate in front of the boiler with a 'Gem' pattern pump directly below. Two rectangular side tanks, one mounted on each side of the boiler, each contained 50gal of water for use in the boiler. Both tanks were connected to the main fire fighting pump and fitted with a ball valve so that they remained full during pumping operations. A feed pump and injectors were used to supply the boiler with water. The paraffin oil fuel tank was positioned between the frames, below the hose box and driver's seat.

A steam regulator, reversing lever, steering wheel and steam pressure gauge were fitted in front of the driver. A second regulator and steam pressure gauge were fitted at the rear of the fire engine for use by the pump operator. Other fittings included pressure gauge lamps, brackets for suction hose, a gong or horn, steam whistle and double safety valves.

The first Fire King to be built and sold to Port Louis, Mauritius in 1899 soon made a good impresssion on its new owners. On 31 December 1901 the Mayor of the City of Port Louis wrote to Merryweather to express his appreciation for the engine. The horses normally employed to haul the earlier steam engines had proved to be unreliable in the hot climate especially during the hurricane season. In January 1901 the fire brigade horses refused to face a particularly severe storm, but the Fire King was driven through the flooded streets, around fallen trees and collapsed buildings without any trouble.

Another Fire King, this time with a pumping capacity of 300gal, was delivered to Cape Town, South Africa, in 1903. A small gas burner kept the engine in steam permanently at a pressure of 60psi ready to answer an alarm call immediately. On a test run the engine turned out in 50sec complete with the Civil Commissioner and members of the City Council clinging precariously to the hand rails and a Capt Hayne in charge. The engine raced to Greenmarket Square where its capabilities were demonstrated to a gathering of civic dignitaries and an inquisitive crowd of onlookers.

There was considerable criticism in 1904 when a Fire King was purchased for the 5th Company of the Santiago Fire Brigade in Chile at a cost of £1,200. To prove the engine's suitability, it was put through severe tests over the badly paved streets of the Chilean capital. In another test the engine was driven into thick mud until it sank up to its axles. But, with skill and a little extra steam pressure, the driver was able to steer the engine out of all difficulties. On 14 November 1904 a large lumber yard fire occurred in Santiago. The Fire King arrived and was supplying three water jets before the first horse drawn engine arrived. At another fire the Fire King arrived second but it was supplying water 15min before any other engine. The Chileans, after being suitably impressed, ordered a second Fire King which was delivered to the 11th Company of Valparaiso Fire Brigade.

Initially the London Fire Brigade decided to carry out its own experimental development work and in 1902 converted a horse drawn steamer to self-propulsion. The engine performed well enough on level roads, but it did not have a sufficiently large boiler capacity to supply enough steam for fast hill climbing. A stop to raise steam was usually necessary when ascending steep hills. A serious fault when a speedy attendance at a fire is essential. Finally this particular engine was converted back to its original horse drawn form in 1906 after costing £308 in repairs.

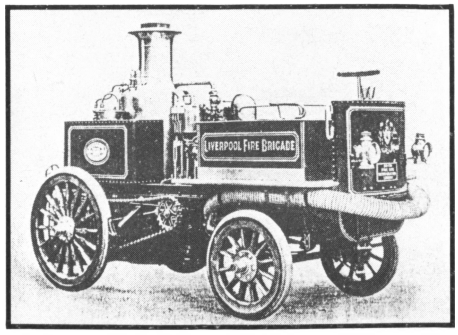
Other experimental London designs involved internal combustion engines and were several years before their time. In 1903 a horse drawn steam pump with its front wheels removed was mounted on the back of a small petrol driven truck chassis. The very uneven loading of the chassis resulted in stability problems and the vehicle had the frightening habit of sliding broadside when descending hills. Another machine built in the same year consisted of a car equipped with a pump driven by the vehicle engine and converted to carry three men. This design could not have been a success because the pump was soon removed and the vehicle relegated to a suburban station. Eventually the London Fire Brigade returned to steam power and in 1905 purchased their first 'Fire King' at a cost of £1,130.

The Merryweather Fire King dominated the self-propelled steam fire engine market in many areas of the world. Due, in no small measure, to the flamboyant character and unusually aggressive salesmanship of James Compton Merryweather. He had cultivated good connections with many governments and fire departments which he used to the full in promoting his fire engine sales. He wrote numerous letters to newspapers simply to get his name into print and before the eyes of the people. Much of his time was spent travelling the world, learning the firefighting requirements of other countries and selling his fire engines.

Unfortunately the Fire King, although successful, did have some serious disadvantages. Not least was the expense of keeping the engine in steam, which consumed about 1,350cu ft of gas in 24hr. The high speed at which the engine travelled over rough roads caused so much vibration that pipe joints could not be kept tight and steam leaks often developed.

As soon as the internal combustion engine had been developed to a stage where it could reliably drive a fire engine, most fire departments abandoned steam traction. However, Merryweather was still able to supply a new Fire King from its works as late as 1918.

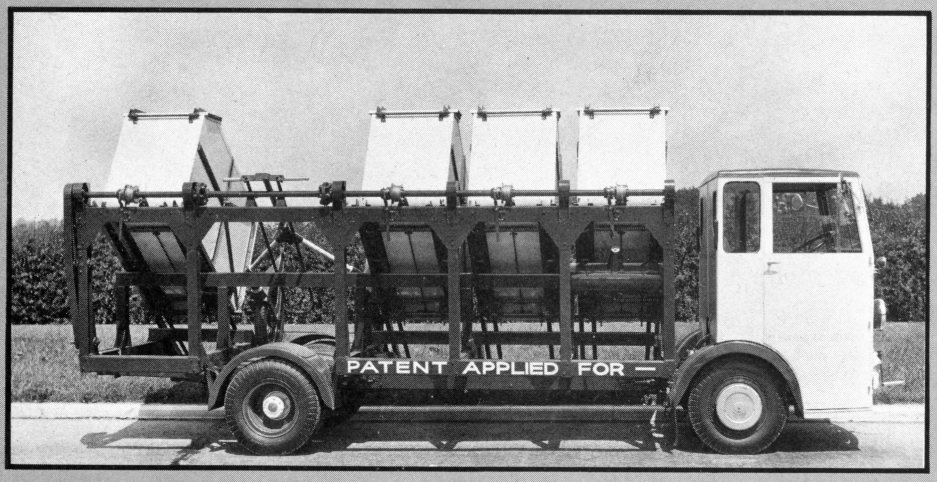
Although self-propelled steam fire engines were in production for only a short time, the gleaming red and brass machine, dashing at full speed must have been one of the most spectacular scenes of the steam road transport age.



Right:
The first of three Fire Kings supplied to the Liverpool Fire Brigade.

New 50 Years ago

Photo-feature
All photos from Ian Allan Library



Above:
A Foden 15 ton eight-wheeler fitted with a Gardner 6LW engine. The body is 22ft long with hinged side and tailboards.

Left:
Offside view of a Dennis chassis with refuse containers operated by the City of Oxford (Fleet No 21). The 1½cu yd containers were handled on a two-wheeled trolley and winched into position shown here. The Dennis has a 30bhp four-cylinder engine and a wheelbase of 11ft 6in.

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By Easter 1937, London Transport had completed the change-over to new buses for routes using the Blackwall Tunnel. Forty modified bodies of STL type were produced with sloping upper sides and tapered rears and 55 seats instead of the usual 56. The staircase was also altered. STL 1866 is seen here emerging from the Blackwall Tunnel.

Left:
Fitted with a 400gpm pump this Mucro model of the Fire King was supplied to the Brighton Fire Brigade.

1,000gal capacity pump, wrought iron wheels and steel or iron tyres. Prices ranged from £850 for a 'Mobilis' to £2,275 for a 'Multiforus'. Metal wheels were an export option recommended for hot climates to combat the threat of attack by termites. With a turnout in under 90sec and a top speed of 30mph, a Fire King must have been a very impressive addition to many fire departments throughout the world.

Merryweather's patent water tube boiler could raise steam in six to eight minutes from cold. But, if an immediate turnout was essential, the engine could be kept in steam at low pressure by a small gas flame or separate oil burning heater. Steam for an alarm call could then be raised in about a minute. A coal burner could be fitted to the engine but the makers strongly recommended the use of the more convenient oil burner which raised steam more quickly, produced no smoke and did not soot up the boiler tubes. As the engine travelled to a fire the draught introduced to the burner by the forward motion increased the heat of the furnace and within five minutes a full pressure of 120psi was available to operate the pump.

The vertical double cylinder steam engine was mounted on a motion plate in front of the boiler with a 'Gem' pattern pump directly below. Two rectangular side tanks, one mounted on each side of the boiler, each contained 50gal of water for use in the boiler. Both tanks were connected to the main fire fighting pump and fitted with a ball valve so that they remained full during pumping operations. A feed pump and injectors were used to supply the boiler with water. The paraffin oil fuel tank was positioned between the frames, below the hose box and driver's seat.

A steam regulator, reversing lever, steering wheel and steam pressure gauge were fitted in front of the driver. A second regulator and steam pressure gauge were fitted at the rear of the fire engine for use by the pump operator. Other fittings included pressure gauge lamps, brackets for suction hose, a gong or horn, steam whistle and double safety valves.

The first Fire King to be built and sold to Port Louis, Mauritius in 1899 soon made a good impresssion on its new owners. On 31 December 1901 the Mayor of the City of Port Louis wrote to Merryweather to express his appreciation for the engine. The horses normally employed to haul the earlier steam engines had proved to be unreliable in the hot climate especially during the hurricane season. In January 1901 the fire brigade horses refused to face a particularly severe storm, but the Fire King was driven through the flooded streets, around fallen trees and collapsed buildings without any trouble.

Another Fire King, this time with a pumping capacity of 300gal, was delivered to Cape Town, South Africa, in 1903. A small gas burner kept the engine in steam permanently at a pressure of 60psi ready to answer an alarm call immediately. On a test run the engine turned out in 50sec complete with the Civil Commissioner and members of the City Council clinging precariously to the hand rails and a Capt Hayne in charge. The engine raced to Greenmarket Square where its capabilities were demonstrated to a gathering of civic dignitaries and an inquisitive crowd of onlookers.

There was considerable criticism in 1904 when a Fire King was purchased for the 5th Company of the Santiago Fire Brigade in Chile at a cost of £1,200. To prove the engine's suitability, it was put through severe tests over the badly paved streets of the Chilean capital. In another test the engine was driven into thick mud until it sank up to its axles. But, with skill and a little extra steam pressure, the driver was able to steer the engine out of all difficulties. On 14 November 1904 a large lumber yard fire occurred in Santiago. The Fire King arrived and was supplying three water jets before the first horse drawn engine arrived. At another fire the Fire King arrived second but it was supplying water 15min before any other engine. The Chileans, after being suitably impressed, ordered a second Fire King which was delivered to the 11th Company of Valparaiso Fire Brigade.

Initially the London Fire Brigade decided to carry out its own experimental development work and in 1902 converted a horse drawn steamer to self-propulsion. The engine performed well enough on level roads, but it did not have a sufficiently large boiler capacity to supply enough steam for fast hill climbing. A stop to raise steam was usually necessary when ascending steep hills. A serious fault when a speedy attendance at a fire is essential. Finally this particular engine was converted back to its original horse drawn form in 1906 after costing £308 in repairs.

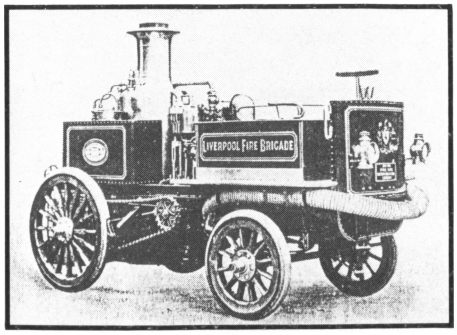
Other experimental London designs involved internal combustion engines and were several years before their time. In 1903 a horse drawn steam pump with its front wheels removed was mounted on the back of a small petrol driven truck chassis. The very uneven loading of the chassis resulted in stability problems and the vehicle had the frightening habit of sliding broadside when descending hills. Another machine built in the same year consisted of a car equipped with a pump driven by the vehicle engine and converted to carry three men. This design could not have been a success because the pump was soon removed and the vehicle relegated to a suburban station. Eventually the London Fire Brigade returned to steam power and in 1905 purchased their first 'Fire King' at a cost of £1,130.

The Merryweather Fire King dominated the self-propelled steam fire engine market in many areas of the world. Due, in no small measure, to the flamboyant character and unusually aggressive salesmanship of James Compton Merryweather. He had cultivated good connections with many governments and fire departments which he used to the full in promoting his fire engine sales. He wrote numerous letters to newspapers simply to get his name into print and before the eyes of the people. Much of his time was spent travelling the world, learning the firefighting requirements of other countries and selling his fire engines.

Unfortunately the Fire King, although successful, did have some serious disadvantages. Not least was the expense of keeping the engine in steam, which consumed about 1,350cu ft of gas in 24hr. The high speed at which the engine travelled over rough roads caused so much vibration that pipe joints could not be kept tight and steam leaks often developed.

As soon as the internal combustion engine had been developed to a stage where it could reliably drive a fire engine, most fire departments abandoned steam traction. However, Merryweather was still able to supply a new Fire King from its works as late as 1918.

Although self-propelled steam fire engines were in production for only a short time, the gleaming red and brass machine, dashing at full speed must have been one of the most spectacular scenes of the steam road transport age.



Right:
The first of three Fire Kings supplied to the Liverpool Fire Brigade.

New 50 Years ago

Photo-feature
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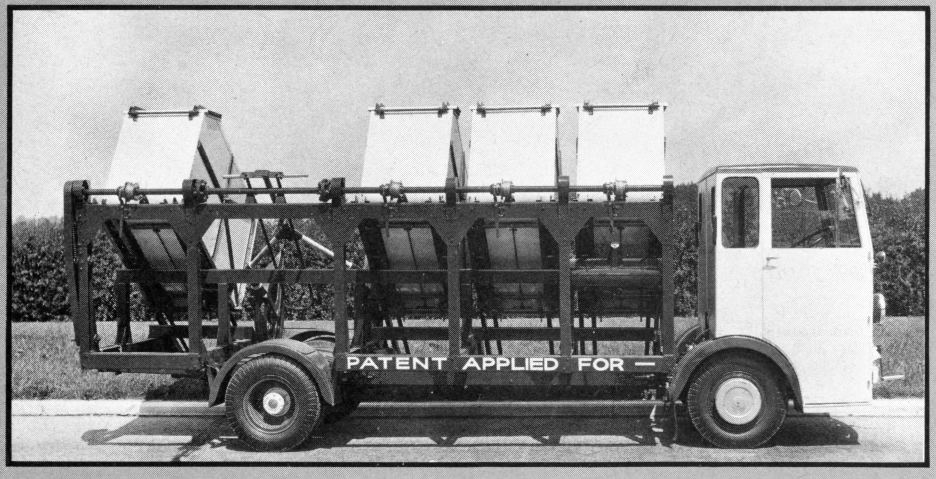

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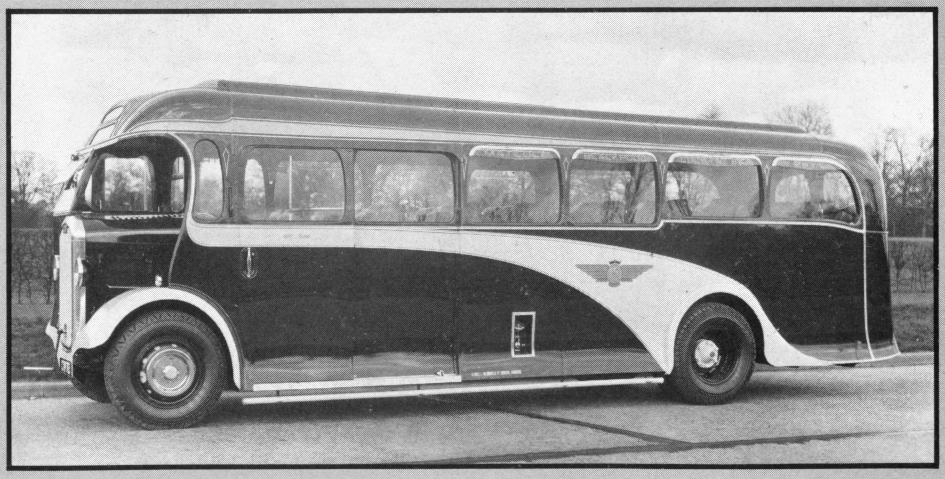
Above:
The type of load which knocks 'hell' out of a tipper body! A Fordson 2-tonner on a new building site at Upminster.

Right:
Registered (CVP 713) in March '37 — just in time for Easter traffic. This Dennis Lancet long wheelbase coach was acquired by B. Ridley & Son, of Erdington, Birmingham.



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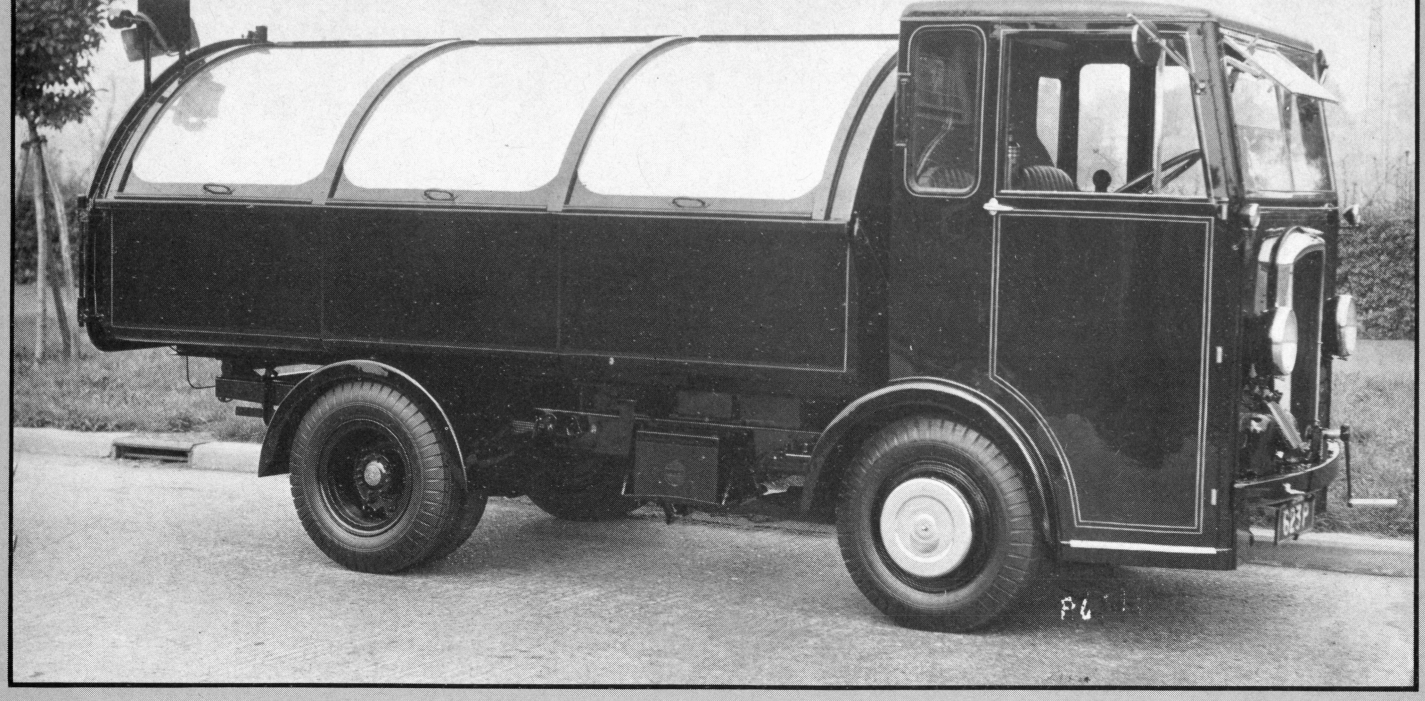
One of 35 AEC Regals with 35-seat Brush body. Later the fleet number was changed to 737 and it remained in service until 1954. The livery was red and cream. Some other coaches in the same batch had MCW bodies.



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A Dennis short wheelbase 7cu yd refuse collector.

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A 3-ton end tipper body on a Vulcan chassis.

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Purchased in May 1937 by C. Grace & Sons of Deptford, this ERF ('Chinese' six-wheeler carried sacks of flour around the Home Counties. It had covered 240,000 miles by September 1953 and averaged 13mpg. The livery is brown and gold.

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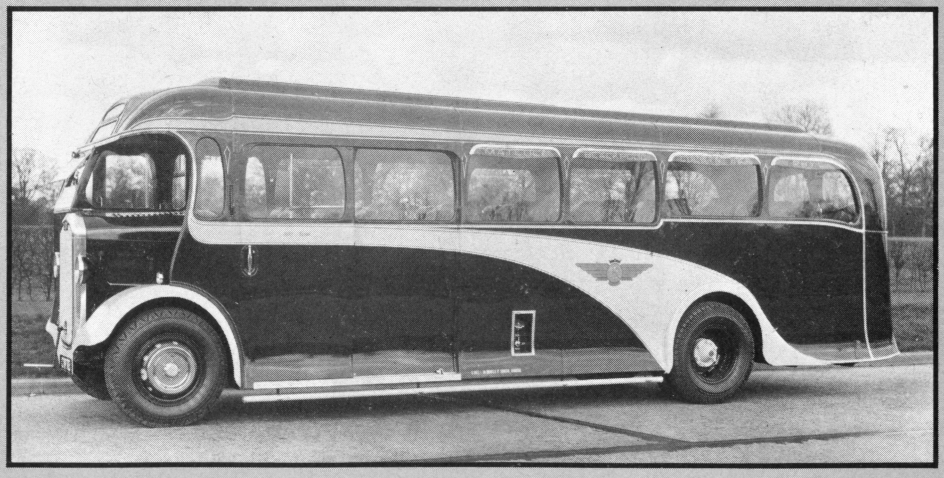

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Above:
A Karrier Cob tractor-trailer combination with hydraulic tipping gear used by a contractor in the Glasgow area.

Right:
A Guy 26-seat coach supplied to T. A. V. Scadding of Wootton-under-Edge who traded as White Lion Coaches.

Below:
One of a batch of Dennis Lance buses with Strachans 26L + 22U bodywork for Aldershot & District Traction Co in 1937. The rear view is useful for modellers.

D. D. Gladwin

'There's nowt so queer'

Anecdotes of coach driving

IN THE great world of transport, folk are unavoidable. Even the lonely long-distance lorry driver finds that people impinge on his existence somewhere — 'The Boss', the girl who does the waybills, loaders, security men, Sid and Lil at the roadside pull-up (or nowadays Sharon and Darren at the motorway cafe!), they all play a part in his existence. If you are to get the plum jobs then some discretion is called for in your dealings with these people, whether chatting up the appropriate girl or downright bribery.

But when all is said and done, after the lorry is loaded you know for a few hours at least you can curl up in your cocoon and forget people. Since half-cabs went a coach driver cannot. I do not have continuous contact with modern road passengers but I see no reason to doubt that they are like those we knew and I hope drivers can find as much humour in them as we did.

To take a simple example. At the time I was working for a London firm whose policy was to run high class day or weekend tours, and for the latter overnight accommodation in four star hotels was automatic and always 'selected' restaurants were used for meal breaks. Initially prices were pitched just high enough to keep the great sweaty rabble at bay, but when this did not work, and the dreaded 'spivs' became apparent, prices were jacked up even higher and very superior restaurants/hotels who utilised vast numbers of 'penguin-like' waiters were picked so that such unwanted people would feel, to say the least, uncomfortable. Blatant snobbery, but at least the drivers were well paid, even if we stayed at no-star hotels and ate fish and chips! The uniform for this particular firm was a bit odd too, — in effect a dark grey suit with matching hat and tie. Although not provided, black, polished shoes were compulsory and white shirts desirable.

On one Monday trip out, a day to 'Windsor and Riverside', I got caught in the classical trap. There I am, all smart and tidy as we help the South Kensington population board prior to setting off. The vehicle was an AEC Regal IV with a Burlingham Seagull body, full fronted and with the courier riding alongside the driver. After half-an-hour or so's driving I was vaguely aware that her buzzer had sounded, but when she came back it was with a message for me. Would I mind taking my hat off? It seems it was obstructing the vision of the people seated immediately behind me. At the next traffic lights I did so and, logically enough, hung it on the coat hook which was located on the bulkhead frame behind my seat.

Now in those days a letter posted in London before midday got to its destination the same day, so comes Wednesday when I book on I'm told that the job had been covered and I was to await the Guvnor's pleasure. I couldn't, off-hand, think of any crimes I'd committed but when you're dealing with people anything that can go wrong will . . . At 9am I get called into the Guvnor's office. 'Tour C3, Windsor, Monday, registration ABC 123 — yours?' 'Sir.' 'Reported you took off hat.' 'Yes, at request of passengers.' 'Not allowed.' 'Oh.' 'Furthermore, written complaint [waving a letter] you hung your hat up deliberately where it would cause the most obstruction to the passengers' view.' 'Eh? I hung it on the bloody coat hook din' I?' 'You wear your hat in future and don't use the coathook.' Having lost my day's work I said, 'OK, but what about today's pay?' 'You lose that for failure to obey instructions regarding uniform'. '**** [below my breath].' Miffed at the injustice, I stopped off at the Guvnor's secretary and wrote out my notice. She never spoke to drivers anyway and merely gazed at me writing like a cat finding a literate mouse who insisted on making out its will. You may imagine the atmosphere.

By my last Friday, despite a couple of expressions of sympathy from other drivers, it was all too apparent I was in the doghouse. The Guvnor's attempt to retain me had failed and being mid-summer drivers were in short supply, this was likely to make life difficult for the courier but for her not to speak to me was, in my book, sheer ill-manners. I had a relatively old nail of a Regal III to add to my misery, which at any speed above 35mph/56kph (max 47/76) was afflicted with a revolting frenetic vibration. So there we are, somewhere between Marlow and Henley, everything shuddering, when I feel something odd scuffing around my feet. I ease off the accelerator and risk a look down to see this small brown thing by my left ankle. By reflex I boot it out of the way. At that time this road was narrow and winding and far from ideal for stopping a coach so I plod on, presuming that this thing was either a fur tippet or fur glove dropped by a passenger or, alternatively fitting my mood, I'd seen too many horror films. It wasn't. It bit the courier. Cheered me up no end listening to her squawks and wails as, sniggering to myself, I drove on to the nearest layby. It appears this rat-sized pooch had escaped from a Kensington 'Tory Organisers' size handbag and the old hag who owned it had been crawling around on the floor trying to find the brute. Our arrival in Henley was delayed while the courier, squawking like a fishwife, argued with the old bat over who was going to pay for her stockings/hospital/time. I merely smirked and yawned most ostentatiously!

Another firm had a totally different approach, running good value-for-money tours aimed at the 'middle-class' only requiring their drivers to wear a uniform not dissimilar to the old LTE (London Transport) summer pattern and, above all, asking for and expecting commonsense when dealing with passengers. We went to Weymouth one day. At 6pm I had all my returning passengers bar one. At 6.15 I

Far left:
A 1946 AEC Regal with Windover 32 seat bodywork. The livery of Timpsons is cream and chocolate. *Ian Allan Library*

Left:
A 1951 AEC Regal IV with the Windover Kingsway 29 seat body. This was one of ten purchased in the early '50s. *Ian Allan Library*

went off to see the local inspector and make arrangements for the old girl to be looked after when she finally appeared. At 6.30 we departed and after arriving at the garage at about the right time and disposing of the passengers, I swept out the coach and toddled home. Next day, Tommy the boss, calls me in. 'Did you leave a Mrs Splurge at Weymouth?' 'Yup, it's in the log.' 'She's at Bournemouth. Got on a Royal Blue and fell asleep. You're going to Bournemouth today, so pick her up, OK?' On arrival at Bournemouth I made enquiries and found out she was now at Torquay having 'got on a Westerner and fallen asleep.' You know, we never did see our Mrs Splurge again — I wonder if she's still riding and sleeping on National today?

Another oddball was 'The Major's Daughter'. About 50, straight grey hair, straight grey body, straight grey clothing. In her more lucid moments it was apparent she was extremely well-educated and had, once, been attractive. At other times she was all too clonky. I asked her one day whether she could drive, since she always seemed to take an interest in the road. 'Oh, yes, Daddy taught me. I've got an HRG [sports car]. At least', vaguely, 'I had . . . but I can't remember quite where I left it' and her voice tailed away. She had a habit of wandering in the office and booking for a week's day trips with a specific driver which was, of course, good business but the two seats next to the driver were (usually) for honeymoon couples or a pair of 'chatter-uppers' — ie driver's perks. You will understand that apart from one or two minor habits like forgetting to do up her clothing and a not very pleasant pong, there wasn't much wrong with 'The Major's Daughter' but it wasn't half boring having the same face there every day! Oddly enough she always tipped well.

When I first went to work for this London firm they operated a 'waiting list' expecting a new employee to act as a summer temporary driver for two or three seasons until expansion of traffic or the retirement of a driver made a vacancy. This arrangement suited me, as after the season I went door-to-door selling until Christmas, then (mostly) played snooker until March when driving re-started. Obviously, this system meant the plum regular jobs went to the regulars and us lot got whatever was offered. About a third of the trips were fishermen and an old boy explained the rules of the game to me. 'If it's a good day for fishing you'll get a good tip anyway, but if the boats are every-whichway up' they'll catch nowt so you'll get nowt. But, if you should just happen to buy a case of, say, haddock from a local inshore fisherman for your Mum and just mention that fact in passing, it won't be long before they'll be begging you to flog the fish to them so's they've summink to take to their wives. And you set the price.' It worked without fail!

My favourite party bookings were real Londoners, not today's swallows but maybe a group from down the Elephant and Castle, or factory hands from Pimlico, or dockers, police or even staff from an LT garage! They were quite happy to have a day out to Southend, Hastings, Brighton or Deal. Not Spain or Boulogne or Amsterdam, just plain old England. But if the weather was stinking I knew the boss allowed for 50-miles or so deviation in his costing so I'd get 'em out of London to, shall we say, Sevenoaks for a Hastings or Eastbourne trip, stop and walk back to the saloon. I'd ask them if they wanted to go rightaway to the destination and chance the weather or if they'd sooner we went to Crowborough or Royal Tunbridge Wells for lunch and then saw how the weather was doing. 90% of them would grab the chance of a change then if the weather was still cold and 'orrible we'd perhaps go to Hastings and back by Winchelsea and Rye.

If Eastbourne was the ultimate point we'd go there via Lewes, Newhaven and Beachy Head. Not every day had blazing sunshine even back then! Oddly enough a surprising number of proper Londoners (retired chorus girls, factory hands and the like) knew the countryside as well as I did and there would be shouts of 'Stop 'ere, mate, we come 'ere in the ATS during the war', or ' 'ere, remember pickin' the 'ops 'ere?' or 'Remember the old Tivoli — used to be up there', as we passed through one of the Kentish towns. And even more improbably they loved to seen the Roman Fort (Anderida) at Pevensey, Battle and the Cinque Ports. The boss knew what I was up to and used to flick an eybrow at my mileage sometimes but repeat bookings saved any embarrassment.

Even in those days we had our hooligan element, of course. By and large most decent coach firms tried to eliminate such rubbish bookings but sometimes then, as now, one party would slip through the net. Such nastiness came as a shock after driving London trolleybuses where, as a generality, the other passengers enforced the laws, failing which there was either a constable on hand or a Police box (à la Dr Who — there were thousands of them). One night I saw in the mirror a yob come hurtling down the stairs, bounce on the platform and fall in the road. It seems he had interfered with a squaddies girl. Another late night specimen on the 696 trolley route tried to 'duff up' my clippie, the first I knew of this was when the bell clanged its little heart out by my ear. After stopping I wandered to the back of the bus and finding no clippie trotted up the stairs. She was somewhat dishevelled but the hooligan was hanging upside down from the outward opening (drop down) emergency rear window, held by the paws of a couple of dockers. Obviously, first of all, I made a bit of a fuss of the clippie and made sure she was fit to continue duty before inspecting the lout. 'Wotcha wan' done wiv this, Gov?' 'Dunno really, the girl doesn't want to charge him.' 'Alright if we look after 'im?' 'After who?', I asked, 'I can't see anyone . . .'. And so we proceeded, the hooligan getting off with the dockers near Woolwich.

But one day I was told a Mr Pearce had hired one of our coaches to go to the match at The Den, Charlton; I thought nothing much of it and the evening run which utilised the same vehicle to the dance at the

Left:
Rickards of London took delivery of this AEC Regal IV in January 1951. This type of full-fronted bodywork was popular at the time and similar styles were produced by many different coachbuilders.
Ian Allan Library

Right:
Valliant Cronshaw (a merger of the two well known firms) were operating this Leyland Tiger Cub PSUC1/2 with Duple 41 seat body from 1957.

Bottom right:
Duple produced the Donnington 41 seat body on this 1958 AEC Reliance for Timpsons.
Ian Allan Library

Locarno, Streatham, was one I always looked forward to. As far as I remember I was to pick up at Hendon 1pm, down to the Den, back by 5.30, clean up the coach, have my tea and off again at 6.30 to arrive at Streatham Locarno no later than 8 and return to our home area as and when. For the purposes of keeping the peace we shall call Mr Pearce's party the Midlands representatives of the Downey Green Football Club. How they got to London we never found out and apart from the fact they were pissed as rats the outward journey passed peacefully, although I noticed that internal visibility on this Regal III which, with its Duple A body, was new to us, was singularly poor. No matter how I twisted the mirror there was no way I could see all the 39 passengers behind me, and I suppose in some ways I wasn't surprised when on the way home a chap in a car flashed his tail light at me and gave the universal 'slow down' sign. I stopped, jumped out of the cab and walked to his car. 'No business of mine, but d'you know you have a broken rear window? Looks a bit dangerous what?' I thanked him and walked to the rear of the Regal. There was no rear window, just the nude backside of a football supporter in the hole.

Since, ultimately, the driver of a PSV is (or was!) responsible for virtually everything that happens to his vehicle I had no option but to climb back in the cab and head for the nearest telephone. The problem was, of course, if I rang the police there was a damned good chance they'd nick me on some charge rather than touch the hooligans. (That hasn't changed much you may say . . .). So I rang the Boss. He listened, grunted and told me to stay where I was. I did — literally, as I could see the yobs were up to no good in the coach and the odds were too rough for me. After a few minutes various carloads of constabulary arrived. When I saw the inside of the vehicle it was obvious that our visit to the Locarno was a non-starter. Slashed seats. Smashed lights. The transmission inspection panel missing. Two smashed windows. Moquette trim in ribbons. Urine and you-know-what over the floor. Bits broken off. But most of all, the roof linings stoved in! At the time the saga of this vehicle made headlines in the newspapers; now, of course, it would be commonplace. I ran back empty, and after reading my report the Boss gave me the keys to our new Regal IV/Harrington intimating by putting his hands around my throat exactly what would happen if that came back battered. The 30-odd girls, all wearing different perfumes, did damage of a different — and much nicer — kind and I thanked Mr Pearce for ensuring I had a full-front instead of half-cab!

Readers have no doubt experienced the coach stations of today, but how many remember the chaos of Cheltenham on a summer weekend, the slipperiness of Victoria in the autumn, the coughing of Digbeth sparrows in spring or the unholy bleakness of Carlisle at 2am on a winter's morning! Most coach stations are singularly melancholy places out of normal hours. There might be an odd troglodyte of an Inspector in his office, a tramp or two huddled up in the refrigerated waiting room, the pervasive stink of diesel and battery acid, and somewhere a tap dripping — or maybe just condensation! But oh so dead when at 5am you hopped up into the cab, checked handbrake, floored throttle, pushed or pulled starter and waited for a rattle from the Gardner and saw a cloud of thick swirling blue smoke in the mirror. This done you bailed out and awaited events. The blind says Bristol via Hungerford and Bath. Up comes Passenger No 1. 'Are you for Birmingham?' 'No duck, stand C5.' '?Nh?' 'Next row, that black and red bus with Birmingham on the blind.' 'Oh', and off they go. Passenger No 2. 'Cardiff?' 'Stand X2, change at Cheltenham.' They walk away. No 'thanks' offered, or really expected. 'Excuse me, chuck, Manchester?' 'Dunno mate but let's look at the indicator over here', gesticulating at the wall. You walk over there but on arrival find the erk isn't with you. However at this point a vast armada of passengers suddenly appear drawn like flies to the sticky paper of your hat. The majority could not read, or understand, the 24-hour clock so effectively, all one had to do was to look up the timetable and translate it for the passengers. 'Newcassel hinny?' 'C6, 6.30.' 'Swansea?' 'R9, 7 o'clock, change at Cheltenham.' 'Thass odd, the 12 o'clock last Tuesday went from R2. Are you sure you'm right?' I ignore this. 'Preston?' 'G3.' 'The Inspector said G5.' (Thinks '****'; says 'Perhaps its changed'). Amid the bedlam a voice pipes up 'Do you know where the Bath is?' 'Yes, duck, had one this morning, stand B9.' 'Are you sure?' 'Yes, duck.' 'Oh, stand E9 you said?' 'No duck, B9.' 'Are you sure?' 'Yes, I'm the driver.' 'Oh', doubtfully, 'shouldn't you be in your bus collecting tickets?' She scuttles off on seeing my eyes go red.

Mums, Dads, Grannies, kids, babies, baggage, prams, parcels, chickens — chickens? Oh yes, dead ones, umbrellas, raincoats, sweaters, hats, greasy bacon sarnies (dropped in the doorway and well trodden in), dolly-birds (not very dolly at 5am though!), Aunties, Uncles, Sweethearts — it was all grist to our mill.

And after that bedlam it was so different to load at our local spot known simply as 'The Green'. Just a coach and a driver, still 5am, still bleak but, as always on a Wednesday, up comes Mrs Jones, 80 if she's a day but looking forward to her weekly outing; Mr Parker, a spry 70, with his pretty young wife; the WI type ladies heading for 'their' block of seats; a handful of young couples; a few stragglers and, inevitably, 'Aunty', always five minutes late, always out of breath, always scruffy (not surprisingly as she, the baker's wife, had been up since 3am, — but her sticky buns — cooked at the bakery that morning — ah!). And so we chug into life, behind me 39 assorted people, facing 280 miles of driving — why? Do you know? I'm damned if I did or do.

FIRE! FIRE!

A LOOK AT MODEL FIRE APPLIANCES
2. OTHER BRITISH MAKES

Pat Hammond

THE ARTICLE in the last issue of *VR* was devoted to the fire appliances in the Dinky range. While these were perhaps the best series made in Britain there were good models made by other British toy makers and in this article we will be looking at some of these.

Before the last war Minic had produced an attractive clockwork model in tin plate based on the streamlined fire engines of the time. This was similar in appearance to the one modelled by Dinky. It had working headlights operated by a 1½ volt battery held in a compartment on the near side, a well modelled radiator and a two stage detachable ladder. The model first appeared in 1937 at a cost of 6s (30p) — the most expensive in the range. Following an interruption in production during the war it was re-issued once hostilities had ceased but without working headlights . . . The tools later went to New Zealand.

A kit-built pressed tin model was issued by Chad Valley around 1950 in its Ubilda series. A clockwork motor drove the rear wheels and the number plate carried the inscription — CV10033.

Many British toy manufacturers produced fire engines during the 1950s. From Morestone came one with a London type wheeled escape while a similar model based on a Dennis was produced by Benbros. Charbens made an open fire engine which had two firemen on the front seat divided by a ladder which ran between them while Crescent produced a turntable and extending ladder with firemen and Budgie a Wolseley fire car.

It was also in the 1950s that we saw the introduction of two new major ranges of diecast toys — those of Lesney and Mettoy.

Lesney produced its first Matchbox Toy in 1953 but No 9 in the series, a Dennis fire engine, did not appear until two or three years later. It was so popular that it had to be re-tooled in a comparatively short period of time and when it was finally dropped it was replaced by another fire engine of more modern appearance. This was a 1:93 scale Merryweather which survived until 1966.

In 1964 two more fire vehicles were added to the range. These were six-wheeled airport fire tender (63), also in 1:93 scale and which survived until 1968, and a Ford Fairlane chief's car (59) to 1:80 scale. Yet another fire appliance arrived in 1966 but this time clearly with the American market in mind. The new arrival was a Maxim fire pumper (29) in Denver livery and to 1:104 scale.

By 1966 the Merryweather had had a long life and it was time for a change and this time Lesney chose a Landrover chassis with a Carmichael body. The new model appeared in Kent Fire Brigade livery (57) and was to 1:77 scale.

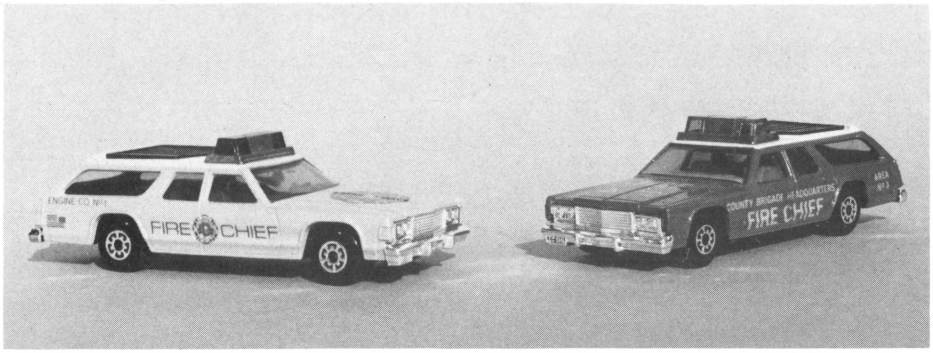
The American fire chief's car had changed the previous year to a 1:73 scale Ford Galaxie but was now in the Kent Fire Brigade livery to match the Landrover. This was to survive until 1970 when it was replaced by a Mercury in the same scale.

By 1970 it was time once again for a change. The Maxim and Landrover had to go but in their place came the ever popular Merryweather Marquis (35) now in 1:86 scale and in London Fire Service livery.

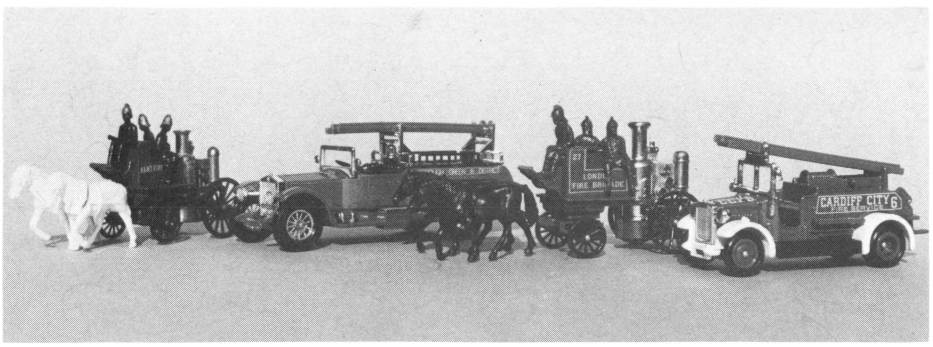
Top:
The Matchbox 75 series. Left to right — No 9 Dennis; No 9 Dennis retooled; No 9 Merryweather on AEC Mercury; No 35 later Merryweather with AEC Ergonomic cab; and No 29 Maxim Fire Pumper (Los Angeles Fire Dept).

Below left:
Matchbox 75 Series No 57 — a 1:77 size model of LandRover Carmichael.

Below:
A later Matchbox 75 — the RangeRover Carmichael Commando at 1:75 size Lesney Super Kings.



Left:
A Dodge Monaco Estate in yellow for City of Hackensack and on the right the same moulding in red for County Fire Brigade HQ, Area 3. Both are to 1:48 size.



Below left:
Left to right — Lesney's Yesteryear Y4 the well known 1905 Horsedrawn Shand Mason and the Y6, a 1920 Rolls-Royce for Borough Green & District. In the foreground are the two Lledo Days Gone models of the Shand Mason and the unidentified 1920s-1930s model.

Bottom left:
The two Corgi models of the Bedford Utilicon — the early version in green on the left and the later one in red with suitable inscription on the right.

From now on closeness to prototype gave way to fantasy. Some recognisable models managed to survive this fashion including a Simon Snorkel (13) issued in 1977 and more recently a six-wheeled Range Rover Carmichael a natural successor to the Landrover Carmichael of 1966.

The larger scale K series of Lesney models also contained a number of fire appliances but none could have been more popular than the 1:60 scale AEC Merryweather (K15) made between 1964 and 1972 in Kent Fire Brigade livery. It carried the number 15 and can be found in toy cupboards throughout the British Isles. Also worthy of mention in the Lesney King series is the Dodge Monaco saloon (K67) of 1978 which appeared in both red and yellow liveries of American fire brigades.

There were also fire appliances in Lesney's Yesteryear range the most famous of which was the 1905 Shand Mason horse drawn steam pump (Y4) which first appeared in its series in 1961.

A more recent Yesteryear is the 1920 Rolls-Royce open fire engine (Y6) issued in 1979 and carrying the livery of Borough Green and District Fire Brigade.

The Yesteryear Shand Mason is the most valuable of the Lesney fire appliances. In mint condition it will fetch around £40 but care should be taken not to confuse it with an almost identical model made by Lledo in the Days Gone series. This is a very recent issue and of little value. Lledo have also issued a small scale open fire engine bearing Cardiff City transfers.

The second major manufacturer of diecast toys to rise from the 1950s, Mettoy, is better known as Corgi Toys, While the name tends to be associated with 1:45 and 1:48 scale models (1:43 in later years) the company was responsible for a very large range of small scale models known as Huskeys which were introduced in 1964 to compete with Matchbox Toys. Huskeys were later renamed Corgi Juniors.

The first Corgi fire tender appeared in 1956 and was an early Bedford Utilecon with a divided front window. It carried two ladders on a roof rack and 'AFS' (Auxiliary Fire Service) decals on the green body (405). It later appeared in red with 'Fire Dept' and small shield decals. This later version was one of those also available with a flywheel motor (405M) between 1956 and 1959. This is one of the harder types to find as the additional cost of the motor proved to be unpopular and fewer were sold. A good example would cost around £15.

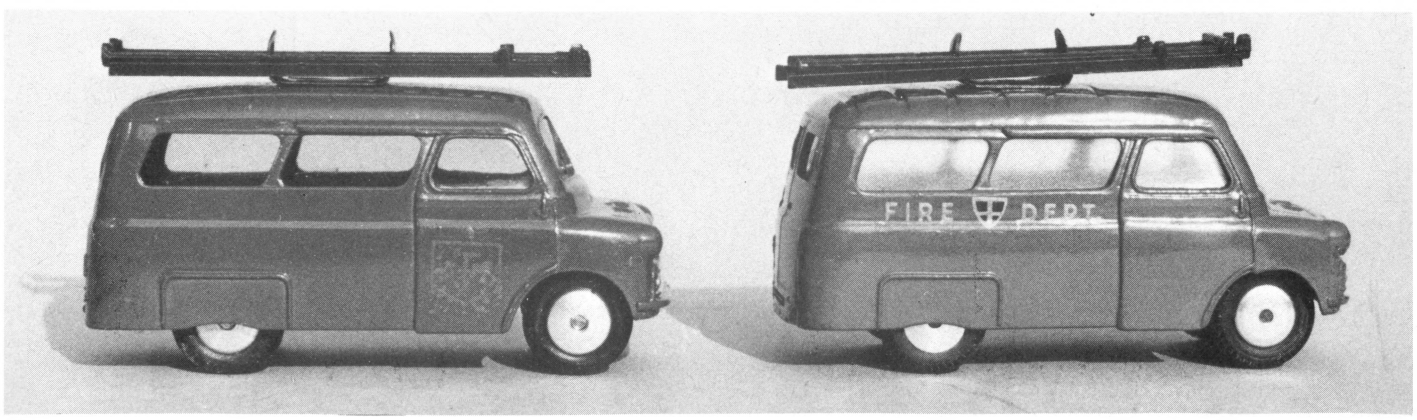
In 1960 the model was updated like the prototype and until its disappearance late in 1962 it had a new grill and a single span front window. This form (423) carried the red livery described above.

Corgi's second type of fire appliance arrived in 1959 and like the one before, it was a fire version of an existing model; this time the Jaguar 2.4 litre (213) saloon. It carried shield decals on the doors and a siren unit on the roof and later versions were fitted with interiors and suspension.

In 1963 it was replaced by the first American fire chief's car — a Chevrolet Impala (439) which was produced in a number of variations over the next three years. In 1965 the model was updated (482) and ran on until 1969.

A purpose built fire vehicle finally joined the Corgi range in 1964 and the choice of subject proved to be a popular one. The Simon Snorkel remained in the Corgi Major range for 17 years! For the first 12 years it featured a Bedford chassis (1127) but in later years it was based on a Dennis (1126). In its original form it featured five firemen in the cab and one in the bucket at the back ready for action!

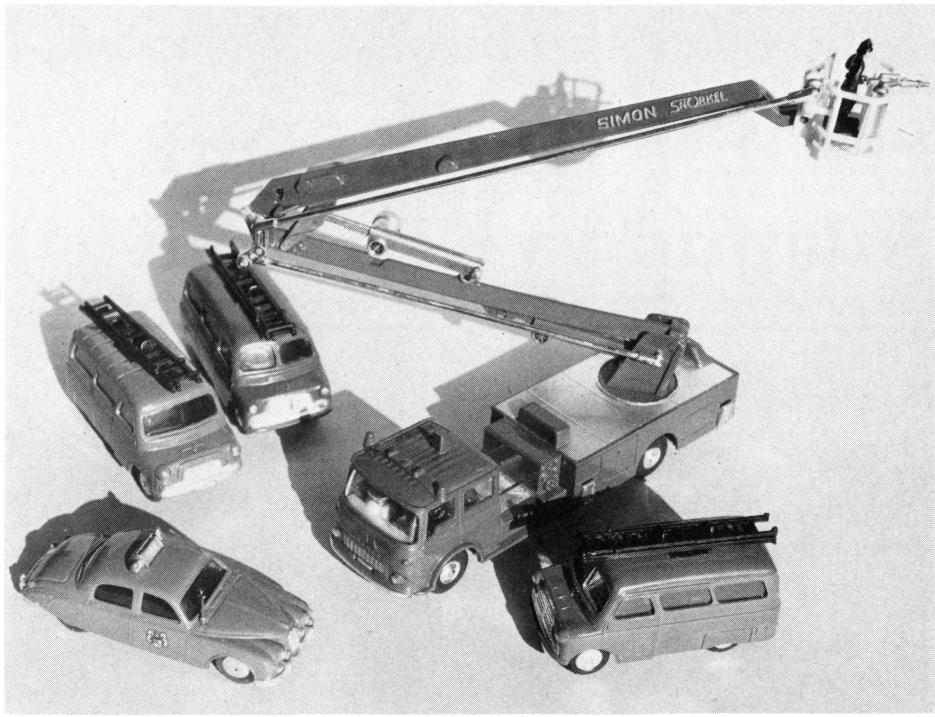
Yet another highly successful Corgi fire engine made its appearance in 1968. This was the ever popular American La France Aerial Ladder Truck (1143). It too had six firemen and also a stack of ladders that gave it tremendous play value. Sadly some of the crew are missing from second-hand examples of the model and so care should be taken when buying one. The model remained in the range for nearly 15 years and I am sure will be remembered for a very long time.



Right:
Some of the Corgi 1:48 size models. In the centre is the Simon Snorkel on the Bedford TK chassis; on the left the two Dormobile minibuses early and later models; from left is the Jaguar 2.4 litre fire chief's car while on the right is a Bedford Dormobile early minibus in AFS green.

Below:
Three Fire Chief's cars by Corgi. The Chevrolet Caprice, the Mercedes 240D, and the Buick Regal made for Marks & Spencer.

Bottom:
Three more Corgi vehicles — The Forestry Warden's LandRover; the Ford Escort van and the Renault 5 in French insignia.



Another spectacular model appeared in 1974. This was the Chubb Pathfinder Airport Crash Tender (1103) which came complete with a battery powered flashing red lamp and a hand pump so that it could squirt water! Some examples carry the name 'Airport Fire Brigade' while others are marked 'New York Airport'. The model remained in the Corgi Major range until 1981 when it was revised and re-issued this time without the flashing light but with 'Airport Fire Service — 5 Emergency Unit' stickers.

Among the Corgi fire vehicles of later years were a forest fire warden's Landrover (421), a Mercedes 240D German fire chief's car marked 'Notruf 112' (284), a Chevrolet Caprice (1008) and, for the French market, a Renault 5TS marked 'Sapeurs Pompiers' (295). . . These last three were issued in 1982.

In very recent times we have seen the issue of the current Corgi Ford Escort van in Wiltshire Fire Brigade livery. This was produced as a special production run to raise money for charity and could be a good investment.

Another special was made for Marks and Spencers using the Buick Regal casting but finished in fire chief's red livery.

In the range of Huskeys and Corgi Juniors there were many fire vehicles but most lacked detail and scale . . .

Between 1964 and 1969 the Jaguar Mk X (4) was produced as a fire car and large and small versions exist. These were replaced by a Ford Capri (56) in 1971, a Mercury Cougar XR7 (70) in 1975 and a Ford Gran Torino (70) in 1977.

From 1967 there was a Simon Snorkel on an ERF chassis (36 and 29) and in 1970 it was joined by an ERF fire engine.

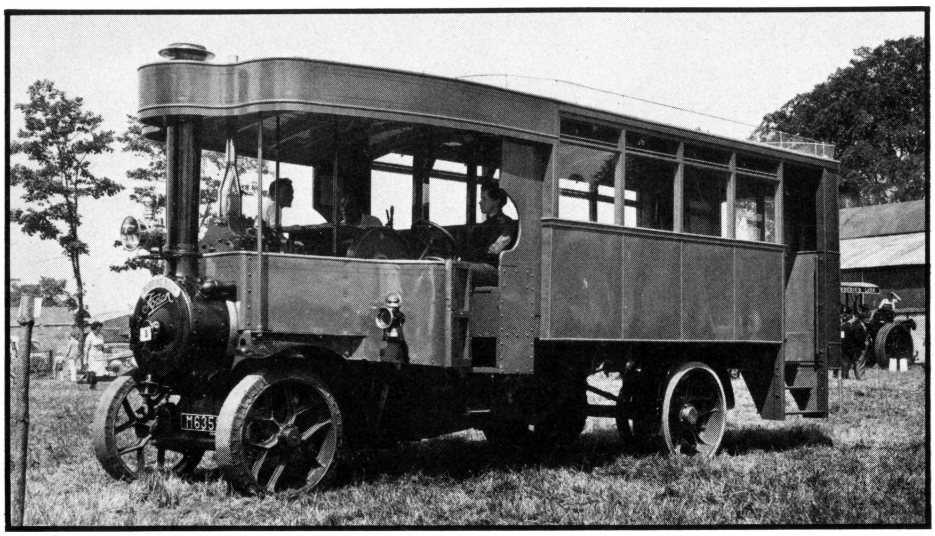
The Chubb Pathfinder Crash Truck also appeared in this scale in 1982. The following year Corgi made a major bid for overseas markets and amongst the foreign issue models were German (119), Swiss (225) and Arabic (193) versions of the crash truck. There were also no fewer than four vehicles in Danish 'Falk' livery including the ERF Snorkel and fire engine.

Finally one fire appliance appeared in the larger size Super Juniors series and this today is a very familiar model. It is the Mack fire pumper (2029) which carried Hammond Fire Dept. stickers and was introduced in 1979.

In the third and concluding part of this short series we will look at some of the very large range of fire appliance models made abroad.

FODEN STEAM LORRY CONVERSION

Adapting a Keil Kraft kit



Left:
The Foden as seen at the Midland Festival of Steam, 15 July 1967.

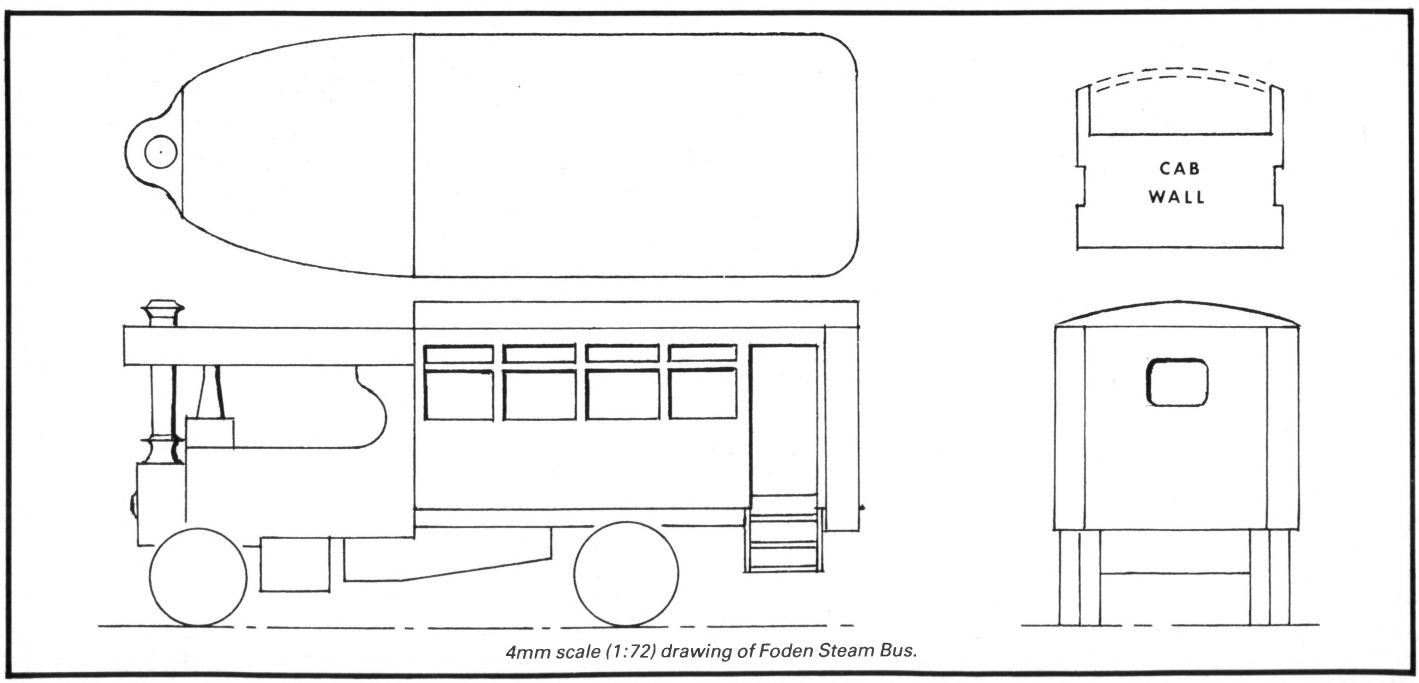
Bernard King

IT WAS on 15 July 1967 that I attended the Midland Festival of Steam. The weather was fine on that enjoyable occasion at Bellamour Hall, Rugeley, Staffs and many interesting vehicles were on show. But the vehicle that caught my eye was number 5 in the list of 'Engines'. The programme booklet informs us that it was: 'Foden Steam Bus No: 11340. Built 1922, Weight 4 tons. Foden steam omnibus, replica of "Puffing Billy" used to convey members of the Foden Works Band to their engagements from 1916 to 1926. Crew: G. E. Milligen, H. Moore'.

Armed with only that information, I long felt that this vehicle would make an excellent model and with a suitable Foden kit available, the rest turned out to be easy. I have always had certain reservations about taking a kit from its box in pristine condition and cutting it about to effect a conversion. Suppose the conversion does not work out? Will I be left with a half-completed model now beyond repair? Although these may, indeed, be wise thoughts they were dispelled as soon as I opened the 1/72 scale, Foden C type Steam Wagon by Keil Kraft. It was obvious that this was not a top-class kit and little would be at stake if failure ensued. On the actual kit used for this conversion, 'flashings' were rife and some parts ill fitting and mis-shaped.

Provisional perusal indicated that few changes were needed to the basic kit the first being the cutting of a wide, almost full-width, aperture in the rear wall of the cab (shown as part 2 on the instruction leaflet). The straight, lower-edge of this 'window' should be measured 9mm from the top of the curved crown of the cab wall. The cutting out was quite easy; drilled first and finished with a Swann-Morton tool and a small flat file. To protect the fine uprights from damage during the cutting out, the top arch of the window was retained until completion of the aperture and then cut away.

The next modification is a very small one to parts 3 and 4, the cab sides. The upper edges are extended by 1.5mm and this can be done from spare pieces of plastic in the kit. Each of the two extension pieces is only 7mm×1.5mm (parts 18, 19 and 20 are not required and can be regarded as spare). At this stage the rear wall (2), the cab sides (3 and 4), the floor (1) and the front units (5 and 6) can be assembled. When dry, extend the two fine uprights of the rear wall (2) to match the extended cab sides — also from scrap plastic. The front end of the cab roof must also be raised by



4mm scale (1:72) drawing of Foden Steam Bus.

1.5mm to match the rear cab wall. The tapered part (9), the safety valve, is useful in this respect. Instead of allowing it to pass through the roof, as originally intended in the kit, a small hole is cut in a 5mm-square of plastic through which the top of part 9 can pass. The small square is stuck to the underside of the cab roof in the correct position to receive part 9. When drilling small holes in plastic I can never seem to find the right size in small drills. To overcome this, one dodge is to drill a tiny hole in the plastic with a piece of cut-and-roughly-filed piano wire (about 16 or 18 gauge) set in a pin vice. The final, exact size of the hole can then be carefully filed-out with a very small rat-tail file.

Before attaching the cab roof, the interior of the cab should be furnished and painted but as engine parts are not supplied with the kit (!), it is a matter of personal choice at this point. Rather than ad lib a sort of 'thingummybob' for an engine, I decided to use black matt paint and leave well alone!

The next modification is to the chimney. By now it will be apparent that, having raised the roof by 1.5mm, the chimney will need to be lengthened. On my kit the chimney supplied was, like several other solid parts, well endowed with those cute but annoying dimples so common among kits of lesser quality. Rather than try to fill the holes with 'plastic-surgery', I made a new chimney from scrap pieces but utilising the fancy rims at the top and bottom of the chimney. In practice, the chimney column is in two separate parts. A curved 'former' must be attached to the front end of the cab roof to which the canopy 'pelmet' will be attached later. The lower section of the chimney attaches to the under-side of the former and the upper section to the top.

The flat body comes next but take due note that the side, upright pieces (18 and 19) are not used in this conversion so ensure a good, strong join between the cab wall (2), the flat body floor (17) and the 'tank' (14) on the underside. Before attaching the flat body, as described above, cut out a small section of the flat body (27) to accommodate the steps to be fitted later at the rear, near-side. This cut-out section should be 17mm in length and 4mm in width taking care not to cut into the chassis frame underneath. Another small modification to the flat body is to cut the corner at the rear, off-side to allow the rounded bus body to fit later.

The scratch-built body

The construction of the bus body is a straightforward job. For those who are used to this mode of model-making, I can offer little advice as 'scratch-building' is a very individual method of modelling. But for those who have yet to try this freedom from the instruction sheet of the kit, a few tips may be welcome. The parts of the bus body can be made in plastic sheet (of — say — 40thou) but my own, personal favourite for this type of model, where very thin window frames are involved, is the far less brittle Bristol Board. Glued with white, woodworking adhesive, this high-quality drawing card is capable of giving very excellent results. The curved roof can be made in thick (or double thickness) plastic sheet if that medium is used for the side panels. For joining plastic parts, 'Plastic Weld' or an equivalent will be found to be very suitable applied according to the

Below right:
The completed model awaiting painting.

Below centre:
The shaded piece indicates the additional plastic needed to raise the cab roof by 1.5mm.

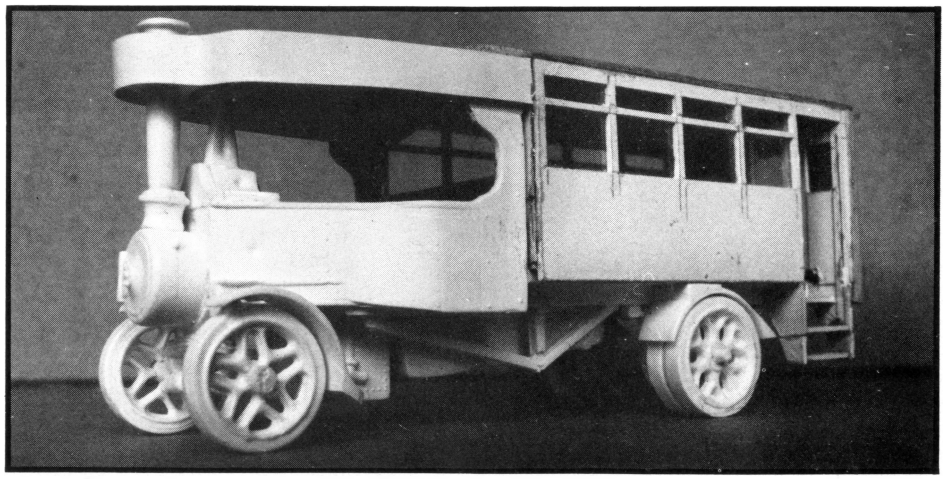
Centre right:
Detail of modified front cab-roof support using the safety valve.

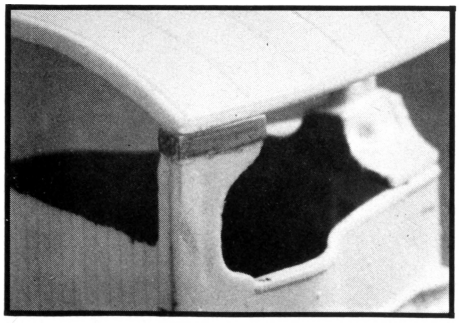
Far right:
The forward extension to the cab roof used for chimney support and the former for cab pelmet.

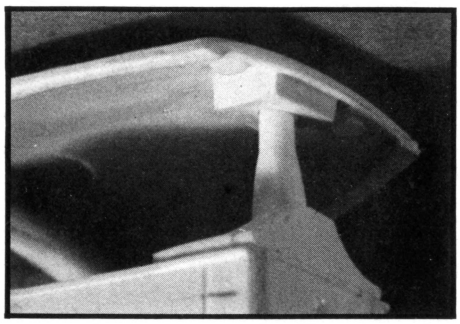
Bottom:
Detail showing shape of extension to the cab roof.

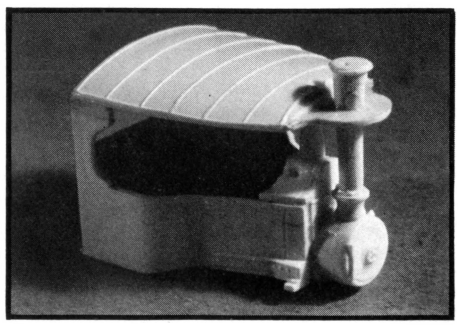
Bottom centre:
Modifications to the kit include rear opening for the cab, cut-away for step and corner cut-away to accommodate the bus body.

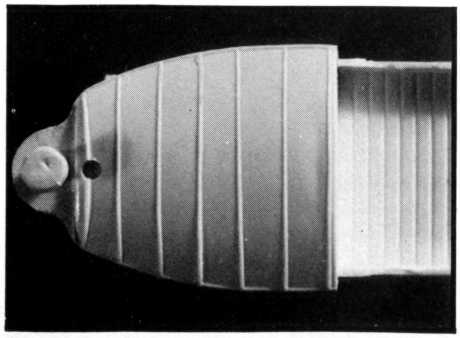
Bottom far right:
The scratch built body showing oversize roof and corner pieces awaiting a 'sanding' trim. Temporary tie-piece is visible at the lower edge of the door opening.

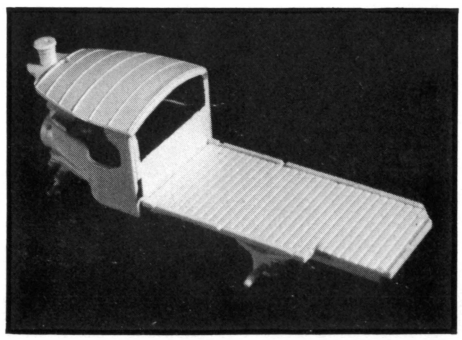


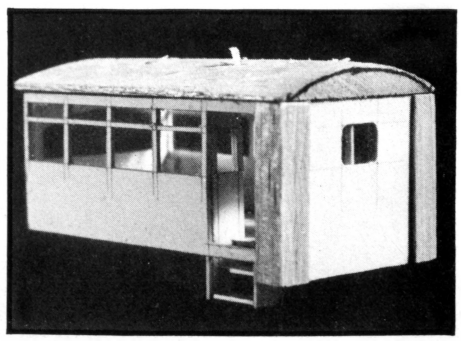




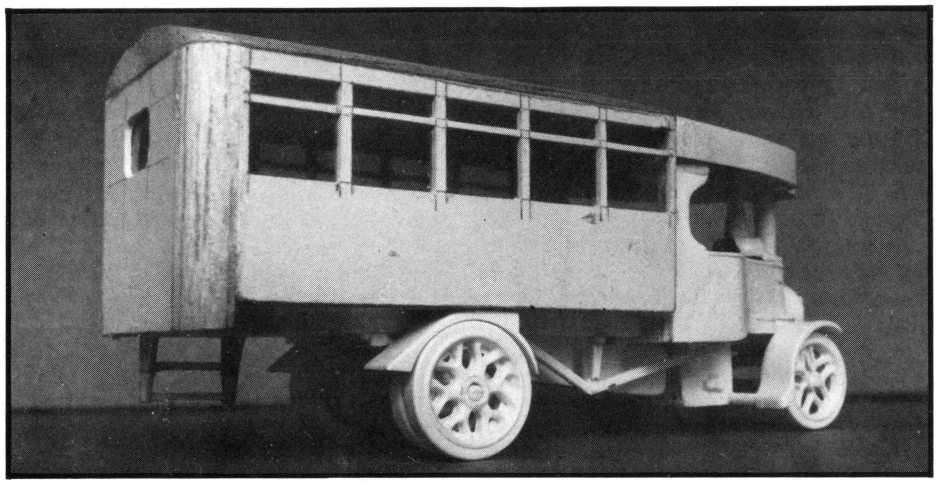








Left:
Three-quarter rear view of the Foden steam bus at Midland Festival of Steam on 15 July 1967.



Below left:
Same viewpoint of the completed model awaiting painting. Note the rounded Balsa rear corners. The length of the model is 95mm.

Bottom left:
Copy of a plate showing a Foden steamer and trailer. See Additional Note.

instructions. Odd, scrap parts from the kit can be used for the rear, rounded corners of the bus body but if you opt for Bristol Board for your panels, small pieces of Balsa wood can be used for both the curved roof and the rear corner pieces. These balsa pieces can be glued to the model oversize and trimmed to shape when the adhesive is dry. Another useful wood is mahogany but due to its comparative hardness, the shaping is best done before fixing the wood parts into place. Small pieces of clear film should be glued on the inside of the panels to simulate the windows and do not forget to paint the thickness of the card before applying the clear film — not an easy task afterwards!

Add the access steps noting the two, small windowed side-panels on each side of the entrance doorway. As there is always a risk to delicate parts until they are assembled, it is a good idea to leave a tie-strip along the bottom of the rear entrance opening. When the bus body is strongly assembled and well set, this piece can be cut away. In the off-side photograph of the full-size vehicle seen at the Steam Festival, the seating appears to run around the edge of the bodywork. A piece of card or plastic will suffice for this item set about 7mm above the floor surface. With the body assembled, note that there should be a slight 'apron' projecting downwards on the body sides. Put another way; set the bus body so that the lower edges of the side panels coincide with the lower edges of the flat truck body on the plastic kit. This will mean that the bus body floor will be 1.5mm from the lower edge of the side panels.

Other than the plastic parts of the kits which are not actually involved with the conversion, there is little else to do in the construction stage. With the bus body fixed in place the canopy 'pelmet' can be added. When fixing Bristol Board to plastic it has been found satisfactory to use 'Plastic Weld' liquid rather than white glue. Before bringing the parts together apply the cement to both surfaces — card and plastic — and then bring parts together immediately. Card or plastic is suitable for the 'pelmet' and should measure 4.5mm to 5mm in height. To ascertain the actual length of this item try out 'mock-ups' before attempting to apply adhesive.

Painting

As I remember the vehicle, on show that day in 1967, it was finished overall in dark green except for the boiler and funnel which were black. For those who wish to add a classy finish, a company in the model railway field, Springside Models, market a range of tiny, 'OO' gauge lanterns some of which are suitable for this model.

Additional note

I do not know if this might be of any interest. My son brought it to my notice as he is far more conversant with the model railway market than myself. Using the same Keil Kraft, 1/72 Foden 'C' type Steam Wagon kit, a very pleasant modification is possible by using the 'Frasers of Ipswich' container model marketed by Main Line. This 'container' seems to be very much based on the one that appears magnificently in colour in the book *Street Jewellery* (New Cavendish Books, 1978 and I have also obtained a US paper-back version, at a cut price book shop, entitled *Enamelled Street Signs*, Everest House Publishers, New York, 1978).

Further possibilities for the Foden kit can be found in the inexpensive 'container' kits sold by PECO.

A black and white print of the Fraser enamel sign is reproduced here. Come to think about it, the engine on the enamel sign might not be a Foden — but what matter!

Letters

Trade Stands at Rallies

Sir: We were interested in your editorial comment in the September-November 1986 issue. As vehicle preservationists, and more importantly in this context, retail traders at vehicles rallies for more than 10 years, we have also noticed the rapid decline in the standards of associated trade stands.

We believe, however, that there is, by and large, a prime cause — the trade stand fees at vintage vehicle/bus rallies are too low, yes, too low! When we examine the rates we were paying 10 years ago we think, that by comparison, today's rates are often a bargain. Clearly, so do many non-transport related trades since it is now more profitable to attend rallies rather than traditional markets.

Low trade stand rates also encourage weekend traders to stock up at their local cash and carry on Friday just for the weekend trading. That is the prime reason for many stalls selling 'the same diecast toys'.

Ultimately, many of the specialist traders that are capable of offering the rally-going public the wide range of transport-related products that they appreciate (in one convenient location) will simply not bother to attend. (We know, from experience, that many spectators are as interested in the specialist trade stands as they are in the vehicles). Clearly, for the record, bona-fide preservation groups should benefit from low cost (or free) participation.

There is, of course, a quid pro quo — higher trade stand rates ought to command better (or at least some!) organisation of the trade stands area. We would like to think that in 1987 we will not arrive at the rally site before the organisers as often as we did in 1986 or to find the trade stand marshall's caravan with the 'back in 5min' sign.

For anyone in any doubt as to how to organise trade stands they should attend the Beaulieu Autojumble — the operation is, admittedly, commercially based, but it is very professional.

Les Duplock
Director, Model Road & Rail,
Worcester Park, Surrey.

Cleethorpes Trolleybuses

Sir: I was interested in Andrew Fieldsend's article in the last issue and would like to add a few notes. No 56 also received the grey and blue livery together with the unmodified No 57 which appeared to become a reserve vehicle, in use from about the old Whitsun holiday weekend until the end of September in the final years, with the advent of Nos 59-64.

No 57 was used as a mobile addition to the annual seafront illuminations in August and September from, I believe, about 1948. Clad in a framework to carry the electric light bulbs and set-pieces, this vehicle ran each evening between the turning points at the Borough boundary to the terminus at Cleethorpes Bathing Pool. Like the trolleybuses the pool is no longer part of the seafront scene and the present-day bus services operate mainly as long circular routes through both towns.

No 55, the last of the modified vehicles to return to service, differed internally in minor details and I suspect the photograph (top of page 19) may show No 55 fresh from the paint shop before the addition of exterior advertisements. Although this vehicle was the last one modified and reappeared much later than the others memory fails me regarding the exact date and year.

G. E. Adames
Grimsby.

Apex to Bignalls

Sir: The part of this article which caught my eye was the reference to the vans of Film Transport Services. The drivers of the particular collection and delivery services were, as I saw them, very efficiently doing a job that must have been quite complex. A non-delivery could, in the film industry cause a lot of trouble. I doubt if the FTS vans mentioned by S. G. Chapman were making their prime-purpose runs from Elstree studios as FTS were really concerned with the exhibiting side of the industry rather than the production side — a very different aspect of the business.

The work of the FTS vans was unsung and mostly took place at night. They were very far from the so-called 'glamour' of the industry. After the last shows finished on a Saturday night the FTS truck, with its logo emblazoned in almost heraldic splendour in a gold monogram, would collect the heavy transit cases of film and at the same time leave the programme for next week. Their loads were complex, often comprising two features, a newsreel, adverts and trailers — all of which had to be delivered to various different renters' depots at the end of the run. The job was made even more complicated when a 'cross-over' was involved; that is when a programme went straight to another venue without returning to the renter. It was certainly not merely a question of collection and delivery.

I clearly remember, that if, on rare occasions, there was some query a phone call to the local depot of one of the 18 national depots listed (in 1944) would bring an instant, intelligent and productive response — where could one get such a service today?

At the RAF Cinema at Hawarden, near Chester, we were at the end of the North Wales run and the FTS truck would then return straight to the renters' depots in Liverpool. The truck would call at the crack of dawn and there was an 'arrangement' with the helpful driver who would gladly take any early-rising 'erk' so that he could make the best of an off-duty day in Liverpool.

There was another aspect of FTS which struck me as interesting; as they made the collection and deliveries in the night they needed access to the secure film store or entrance foyer at each cinema. This, of course, entailed a key to each 'house'. I once saw our North Wales man open our outside film store, selecting the key from a massive loop of chain on which there were seemingly hundreds of keys! During my stint at the Odeon, Kingston-on-Thames, I never once saw the FTS 'ghost' that stalked so efficiently in the night!

Bernard King
Hampton

Assistance wanted

Sir: I am searching for a 1930s ready-mixed concrete truck. This is required for a company 25th anniversary in Germany this year. Can any reader assist me?

Bill Huxley,
46 Loomer Road,
Chesterton,
Newcastle,
Staffs ST5 7LB.

Book Scene

The Best of British Buses
10 The Postwar Regents 1945-1968
11 Postwar Daimlers 1942-1981
Alan Townsin
Transport Publishing Co
11¾in by 8¼in 96 pages £8.95 each H

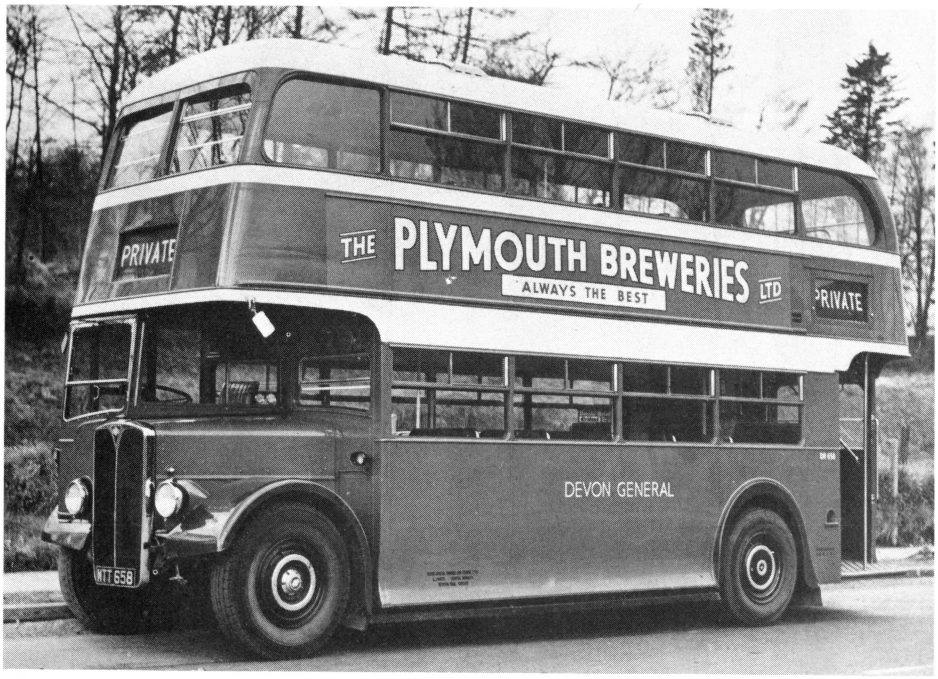
Here are two excellent volumes which continue this series. The AEC Regent book continues the story from No 7 ('Regents 1929-1942), while we are promised another book on Daimlers — presumably, and hopefully, the pre-war models, although this make was not seen in many parts of the country until the wartime versions were available.

Both books have been written by Alan Townsin who has spent his lifetime in the bus industry, either with manufacturers or as a respected journalist, thus we are assured of factual and well written text. The pictorial coverage is excellent — 205 in the AEC book and 186 in the Daimler volume — and the photographic reproduction is to a very high standard.

The AEC book has many references to company policy (or maybe the lack of it), but it seems that if the management and sales staff had been more efficient and zealous over the Regent Mk V, as they had been with previous models, there might have been more on the road. Had the company become too complacent with the London type RT (Regent III) that they let the grass grow under their feet? The trials and tribulations of the various types of Regent are well detailed.

The postwar Daimler is an interesting story commencing with the early CWA6 models, which saw service with London Transport, and many other operators, and progressing through the successful CV series to the CD650 with its wide chrome-plated radiator. This series looked impressive but technically and economically it was a bit of a disaster and only 63 were produced, but better than the CS series of which only 39 were produced. The problems are all fully explained, likewise the success of the Fleetline and its decline when Leyland decided to make changes. A most interesting and informative book.

Both books can be recommended for excellent photographs with informative captions and factual and illuminating text.



The Big Box
T. McTaggart
Alloway Publishing
10in by 7⅝in 96 pages £4.95 L

This is the story of the haulage firms of Edward Box (the father) and Norman E. Box (the son), and of steam traction. There are many stories of the old days and the problems encountered with hauling heavy loads from 1900 and particularly around the 1920s. The text is most interesting although a little disjointed in places. A virtue of the book is the 151 photographs, many of which have never been published before, which come from a collection of old 'magic lantern' slides owned by the late Norman E. Box and generously donated by his eldest daughter to the Road Locomotive Society, who have had a

hand in the preparation of this work. It is therefore a great pity that the book has been printed on an absorbent non-coated type paper, which does not do justice to the photographs. The layout and design of the book also leaves something to be desired, but nevertheless a most interesting book for the historian and enthusiast.

(Alloway Publishing Ltd, 24 Beresford Terrace, Ayr.)

Portable Steam Engines
Lyndon R. Shearman
Motor Scooters
Michael Webster
Shire Publications
8¾in by 5¾in 32 pages each £1.25 each L

Two new volumes in the Shire Album series which serve as a good introduction to the subjects giving concise factual information. The protable steam engines were developed for driving threshing machines but soon had many jobs on the land and are popular at rallies etc where preserved examples can be seen.

Motor scooters became popular in the early 1950s, but few people realise the first scooter was produced in 1916. The Vespa and the Lambretta became household names, but there were dozens of other makers — all described and illustrated in this book.

Both books are copiously illustrated and excellent value.

Yesterday's Yesteryears
Robert Carter & Eddy Rubenstein
G. T. Foulis & Co Ltd
9½in by 6¾in 158 pages £19.95 H

This is a complete guide to the Matchbox Models of Yesteryear, which are collected by young and old alike, some of which now command high prices when they change hands. It is a glorified 'catalogue' of past and present examples in the range from 1956 to the end of 1983, but the word 'catalogue' does not imply that the book is merely a collection of glossy coloured photographs of which there are 130, for there is a description of the model, with the variations and particularly some of the colour changes. The book does not mention values as these vary according to condition and also in various parts of the country. It does however mention whether the model is scarce or not. There is a good introductory text and the authors and publishers are to be congratulated in presenting a most interesting and well presented book, which is a work of reference and a book to look at which will give hours of pleasure. An appendix gives the scale of the model and the year of introduction while the index incorporates a code to the type of box in which the model was sold.

Unfortunately the price of the book is likely to put would-be purchasers off, but in its defence the colour photographs are excellent even though there is a large amount of 'white space'.

From SMT to Eastern Scottish
D. L. G. Hunter
John Donald Publishers
9¼in by 6⅛in 198 pages £8.50 L

It is 80 years ago that the Scottish Motor Traction Co Ltd was formed and the author has traced the history of this, one of the major bus companies of Britain, from that time up to the present day. Details and liveries of the vehicles used over the years is given where possible, and routes, timetables and tickets are also well covered. A total of 99 illustrations are featured, which are well reproduced bearing in mind the limitations of the non-coated paper used. A useful work of reference but also welcome for the enthusiast reader.

(John Donald Publishers Ltd, 138 St Stephen Street, Edinburgh EH3 5AA.)

Font to Footplate
Rev E. R. Boston & P. D. Nicholson
Line One Publishing
10in by 7in 96 pages £10.95 H

On 1 April last year steam traction and model railway enthusiasts, plus the Church of England, lost a true friend with the death of the popular Reverend 'Teddy' Boston. Fortunately he had just finished his autobiography which is written with his whimsical humour peeping through his reminisences. How he purchased his first steam loco *Pixie*, his exploits with traction engines and steam rollers, and his life and love for the Rectory at Cadeby. His model railway is also fully covered, but he was best known for his love of anything driven by steam. Well illustrated and presented, this book will keep alive memories of Cadeby, the Light Railway and, above all, of 'Teddy' Boston — a friend to everyone.

Steam Thrashing in the Cotswolds
Michael Thexton
Regency Press
8in by 5¾in 116 pages £7.50 H

A factual and well documented account of the trials and tribulations of three generations of the Blackwell family of Cotswold farmers and threshing contractors. The author is a steam traction engine enthusiast, owning a 1907 Ruston Proctor, which featured in his article in *VR No 4*, and therefore it is natural that his book deals more with the traction engines than with the threshing. It is a fascinating story which also illustrates the life style of the 'country folk' in the earlier part of this century. Well illustrated this is a very readable and worth while book.

Mercedes Benz SL & SLC
L. J. K. Setright
Osprey Publishing 136 pages £7.95 H

This is a revised edition of the book first published in 1979 giving the history and technical developments which have made the Mercedes Benz SL and SLC roadsters so successful since they were introduced in 1963. The author brings the story up to date with the latest developments of 1986. There are 11 full colour illustrations plus 90 black and white including some excellent drawings of engines and components.

1932 Ford Street Rods
Mike Key
Osprey Publishing
9in by 8¼in 128 pages £6.95 L

This is essentially a book for lovers of American 'hot-rods' and particularly those based on the old 1932 Ford four-cylinder model B and the Vee-eight model 18. All styles from the classic look of the 1950s to the hi-tech hot rods of the '80s are included in 118 superb colour photographs. For those interested the book is amazing value at only £6.95.

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Colin Burnham
Osprey Publishing
9in by 8¼in 128 pages £6.95 L

The air-cooled Volkswagens were phenomenal cars and many people believe the firm should have kept their principles rather than produce the 'standardised' cars of today. This book looks at the American uses of the 'Bug' (type 1), the type 2 (Caravanettes or Transporters) and the type 3 (1600 saloons and estates). The cars and the modifications and customising undertaken are all portrayed by 126 superb full colour photographs. A most interesting book and one that most people will want to look at, and excellent value for money.

GT40 The Individual History and Race Record
Ronnie Spain
Osprey Publishing
11in by 8in 326 pages £19.95 H

This is the definitive history and record of the Ford GT40 racing car, designed to beat the Ferrari. It tells of its success and the problems and gives a full record of all the races in which it participated and a list of all the cars built and their owners. The book is copiously illustrated with many fine action photographs. While being a reference and permanent record of the car the book makes enthralling reading for motor racing enthusiasts.

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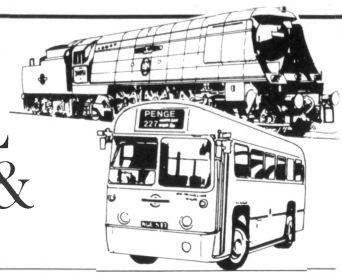

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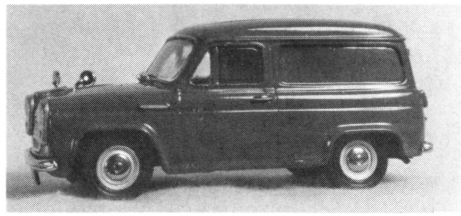

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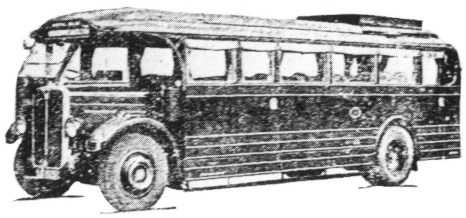

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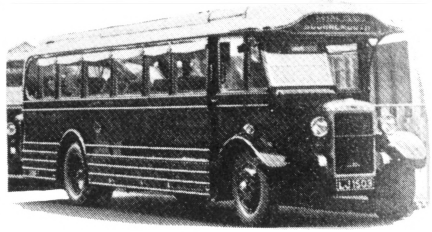

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6023	Renault KZ covered van	)	6054	AMX 10 tank (Fr)	)
6024	Dodge 6 x 6 truck	)	6055	Leopard tank	)
6025	Panhard AML 90 armoured car	) £5.15	6056	VAB 6 x 6 (Fr)	) £7.95
6026	Commando armoured car US	)	6057	AMX 13 VTT tank (Fr)	)
6027	VAB 4 x 4 (Fr)	)	6058	AMX 13 105 tank (Fr)	)
6028	M 20 combat car US	)	6059	AMX 13 Bitube (Fr)	)
6029	Kaiser Jeep US 6 x 6	)	6060	AMX 30 tank (Fr)	)
6030	Renault 4 x 4 covered truck	)	6061	Hanomag half track	)
6031	BTR 40 armoured car USSR	)	6062	AMX 13 VC1 tank (Fr)	)

All vehicles are supplied c w two in scale military figures.

Age D'Or car models and pre WW II Citroen light commercials (S.a.e. for full list).	£3.75 each
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Certain of the vehicles in these sets will not be available singly in the Age D'Or Range.

RETROVITESSE 1:50 scale SAURER Commercials from the 1950s (s.a.e. for full list).	
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M510 (42) Ford AA 30cwt Box Van, body as preserved vehicle, plain	£12.60
M512 (45) Ford Van, as above, transfers 'Allenbury's Foods' 1931	£13.50
M100 (30) Amilcar Italiana Sports car	£9.00
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1 : 76th 'STREETSCENE SERIES'	4mm : ft
R302 (50) London Transport 'STL' Double-deck bus, **central area**	£15.00
R303 (50) LT 'STL' Double-deck bus, **country area**	£15.00
R604/15 (60) Atkinson Borderer tractor unit with Crane Fruehauf 40 Trailer *(new economy twin pack)*	£18.00
R611 (39) AEC Breakdown Tender	£11.70
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Modelscene Reviews

AUTHENTICAST
Showmans Living Van Kit 1:48

This is a superb cast white metal kit for the assembly of a three-roomed, 26ft long, traditional showmans caravan or living wagon. The actual assembly of the kit is simplicity itself, aided by the fact that the 6½in long body of the van is cast in one piece! This body is fully beaded so that it could be lined-out if required, or after painting the raised parts could be carefully scraped to reveal the metal underneath and so give a chrome or stainless steel effect. The bow windows are also an integral part of the casting and vacuum formed glazing is supplied which gives a perfect fit for the windows.

The one-piece chassis, or floor, is complete with the underboxes, or lockers, with the doors and hinges clearly defined.

The one-piece roof has the 16 light clerestory incorporated in the casting and for this another piece of pre-formed glazing is supplied which fits neatly into the underside.

The prototype of the caravan was often on twin tyres all round, and the model is no exception, for eight rubber tyres are included. The rear spring unit (one part) is fixed to the underside of the chassis, while the front has the turntable with the wings (complete with spats) as a one-piece unit and one has only to fit in the axle and wheels and the actual drawbar. One can drill a hole through floor and the turntable and fit a long bolt, so that it is permanently attached yet still free to swivel. Otherwise the front wheel unit merely sits in the requisite position.

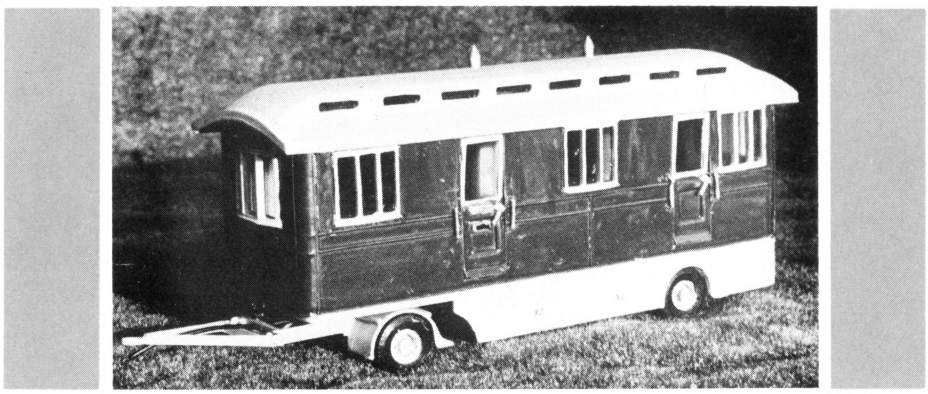
All the parts of the kit received much careful thought by the manufacturer before production commenced and the small items were not forgotten. Door handles and handrails are all 'plated' to give a more realistic effect and this is certainly achieved when they are fitted after the model has been painted. Even the locker door handles are plated.

The kit can be made as a two-door or single door version, as a panel is supplied which fits into the rear door recess; the small cracks then being filled with plastic padding or similar material. Internal partitions are also included in the casting, and this reviewer has left the roof loose at the moment and is considering scratchbuilding a complete interior — wonders if there is a short-cut by finding 1:48 scale dolls house furniture!

A fully descriptive instruction sheet with exploded diagram is enclosed with the kit and suggested colour schemes are given based on observation of the prototypes seen on fairgrounds in recent years.

To repeat, this is a superb kit and because of its size is quite heavy (approx 650gms) and requires a lot of expensive white metal. This is reflected in the price, but it is not expensive when compared with the cost of many small 4mm scale kits. It makes into a perfect replica of the prototype which apart from being used with other kits from the Authenticast range, is also the perfect vehicle for use with some of the Corgi 'Chipperfield Circus' wagons and others.

The kit can only be obtained from Authenticast, PO Box 104, Gloucester GL1 1AL for £27.25 plus £2 to cover first class post and packing.



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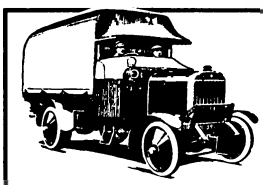

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Rally Calendar

Grateful thanks are given to the Council of the Historic Commercial Vehicle Society for their assistance in compiling this diary. Entrance Forms and further details from address of organiser. *Denotes an event under the jurisdiction of the HCVS.

FEBRUARY

28 **Maidstone.** Agricultural Hall, Maidstone Market. 10.00-16.00. Mid-Kent Collectors Toy Fair. (J. Treadgold, Oneoak, London Road, Wrotham, Kent TN15 7RR.)

MARCH

8 **Leyland.** Lecture Room, British Commercial Vehicle Museum, King Street, Leyland, Preston. 14.30. AGM of Association of Friends of Museum followed by film/slide show. (Manager of Museum, Tel: 0772-451011.)

APRIL

4/5 **Manchester.** Museum of Transport, Boyle Street. Spring Transport Festival plus the 25th Annual Manchester Model Bus Show also takes place on 4th. (Publicity Officer of Museum.)

MAY

2/3/4 **Rushden.** Hall Park. Historic Transport Cavalcade and 'Cobblers Road Run' from Northampton on 3rd. (V. J. Chiverton, 51 Collingwood Road, Eaton Socon, Huntingdon PE19 3JQ.)

3 ***HCVS London-Brighton Run.** (Sponsored by Wincanton Ltd.)

10 **Leyland.** British Commercial Vehicle Museum, King Street, Leyland, Preston. Spring Rally for all historic vehicles but also featuring 60th Anniversary of Leyland Titan buses. (Manager of Museum, Tel: 0772-451011.)

17 **Oldham.** Lyndhurst School. Preserved vehicle gathering. (A. D. Whalley, 65 Langham Road, Oldham, Lancashire OLB 1AX.)

17 **Laira, Plymouth.** 'Western National' Open Day. (R. C. Gale, Avonwick station, Diptford, Totnes, Devon.)

25 **Spennymoor,** Co Durham. Whitworth Hall. Northern Vintage Transport Extravaganza. (NVTA, 6 Granville Avenue, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS26 8ND.)

JUNE

7 ***Dudley.** Black Country Museum. 5th HCVS West Midland Area Commercial Vehicle Rally. (K. Oldbury, 12 Ladywell Close, Wombourne, Wolverhampton WV5 9AH.)

7 ***South Shields.** HCVS Tyne-Tees Run from Stockton to South Shields. Sponsored by D. Hedgley Glass Ltd. (Barry Summers, 19 Westerdale, Greenways Estate, Spennymoor, Co Durham DL16 6SD.)

13/14 **Wheatley.** Oxon. Holton Steam Rally. (G. N. Hastie, 21 Beech Road, Wheatley, Oxon OX9 1UP).

13/14 **Wrotham Hill,** Kent (main A20). Classic Rally. (J. Treadgold, Oneoak, London Road, Wrotham, Kent TN15 7RR.)

14 **Southsea** Spectacular. Southsea Common, Portsmouth. All classes of historic vehicles including Post Office vehicles. (D. Chalker, 16 Lower Drayton Lane, Cosham, Portsmouth PO6 2HA.)

14 **Northampton.** 5th AEC Society Rally. (Peter Rowlett, 3 Coombe Road, Wood Green, London N22 5LB.)

21 ***Oxford-Newbury.** HCVS South Midlands Area 'Ridgeway Run'. (G. Clarke, 11 Vikings, Great Hollands, Bracknell, Berks RG12 4UL.)

27/28 **Dover.** Waldershare Vintage Weekend, Waldershare Park, Eythorne, Dover. (Dover Transport Museum Society, 4 Castle Avenue, Dover.)

28 ***Cardiff.** HCVS South Wales Area Rally and local road run. (J. Courtis, 29 Pencisely Rise, Llandaff, Cardiff CF5 1DY.)

JULY

4/5 **St Ives,** Huntingdon. Hemingford Abbots Olde Tyme Pageant. Note only limited Public Liability Insurance in force. (Sheila Hudson, 48 Eastwood, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire PE16 6RU.)

5 ***Manchester.** HCVS Manchester Area Rally and 'Cheshire Run' from Foden Museum at Sandbach to Museum of Science and Technology, Manchester. (B. Mallion, 3 Trafford Drive, Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 6EJ.)

16/17/18 **Detling,** Maidstone. Kent County Show. (As June 13/14.)

17 ***Wakefield.** HCVS Yorkshire Area Annual Gathering. Thornes Park. (HCVS, 6 Roxholme Terrace, Leeds LS7 4JH.)

18 ***Wakefield.** Top Farm Museum, West Hardwick. HCVS Yorkshire Area Summer Barn Dance and Supper (details as above).

19 ***Wakefield.** HCVS Yorkshire Area 'West Riding Run' from Pontefract to Top Farm Museum. (HCVS, 39 Woodlands Avenue, Harrogate, North Yorkshire.)

19 ***Wakefield.** Top Farm Museum. HCVS Yorkshire Area Summer Auto-Jumble (HCVS, 11 St Margarets Road, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 5BD.)

18/19 **North Weald.** North Weald Airfield. Wings and Wheels Show. (Nr Junction 7 on M11.) (North Weald Enterprises Ltd, 183-185 Hornchurch Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4TE.)

25/26 ***Colchester.** Nayland Road, West Bergholt. HCVS Anglia Area Commercial and Military Vehicle Rally. (M. J. Culham, Marena, Nayland Road, West Bergholt, Colchester, Essex.)

26 **Stratford-on-Avon.** Willesden Airfield. Commercial Vehicle & Road Transport Club. Classic Commercial Motor Show. (A. G. Wilson, 15 Muirfield Drive, Daventry, Northants NN11 4SL.)

25/26 ***Aldershot.** Rushmoor Area. HCVS South Midlands Area. Three Counties Steam Preservation Rally. (As 21 June.)

AUGUST

1 ***Ascot.** Silver Ring. HCVS South Midlands Area in association with Ascot Horticultural Society. (As 21 June.)

2 **Plymouth.** Plymouth City Bus Ltd, Milehouse Depot, Open Day. (As 17 May.)

2 ***Manchester-Harrogate..** HCVS Trans-Pennine Run. (D. Yates, 35 Temple Rhydding Drive, Naildon, Shipley, West Yorkshire.)

8/9 **Detling,** Maidstone. Steam and Transport Rally (As 13/14 June.)

16 ***Milton Keynes-Woburn Abbey Run** and Rally. HCVS Chilterns Area. (H. Godfrey, Tall Trees, Swannells Wood, Studham, Bedfordshire.)

16 **Bognor Regis.** West Park. Rotary Club Motor Gala including run round town. (D. Foster, 5 Neville Road, Bognor Regis, Sussex PO22 8BN.)

SEPTEMBER

6 ***Bournemouth-Bath Run.** HCVS Southern Area Rally at Green Park Station, Bath. (G. Ridler, 55 St Catherines Crescent, Downton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 2NR.)

13 ***Wroughton,** Swindon. Science Museum Open Day. HCVS participation in association with Science Museum. (As 21 June.)

20 **Ingleton,** North Yorks. Festival of Transport. (J. Knox, The Old Barn, Mill Lane, Ingleton, via Carnforth, Lancashire LA6 3ER.)

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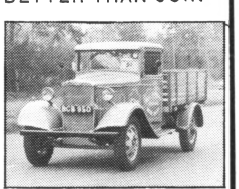

Send for details to The Secretary, Historic Commercial Vehicle Society, Jan Graves, Chainbrook Road, Shadoxhurst, Kent TN12 0EJ.

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